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**Discursive Self-representations in Russian-language
Internet Forums: a case of Russian migrants in the UK**

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ABSTRACT

The thesis analyses the discursive construction of migrants' identities through their native language communications, using Russian-speaking migration in the UK as the case study. Material from internet forums these migrants were engaged in the years 2002-2005 forms the basis of this research. The project is concerned with the question of how Russian-speaking migrants, faced with the process of accustoming themselves to a new place of residence (UK), re-negotiate the Self, their homeland (in both real geographical terms and metaphorically through their cultural affiliations) and the Other.

This study draws on theories from a range of research perspectives including hermeneutics, discourse analysis, cultural studies, and ethnography. The theoretical framework developed in this thesis combines Foucault's analysis of discourse with Lotman's model of dialogue between cultures. The thesis also develops sampling techniques for virtual data.

By examining how the dichotomy Russia vs. Europe/the West is imagined in the researched data, this study argues that the concept of Europeanism obtains positive associations, while the concept of the West retains its ambiguity for Russian-speaking migrants. The thesis identifies Europeanism as a discursive object of knowledge and examines its categorizations. The study identifies *kul'tura* and *tsivilizatsia* as grids of specifications of Europeanism, and investigates Self/Other dialectics attached to the object of knowledge. Finally, the thesis analyses the dynamics of cultural appropriation under influences of the host context, and elaborates on semiotic "translation" of new phenomena.

INTRODUCTION

Aim of the research

This study attempts to explore the identity dynamics of Russian-speaking migrants to the UK through the analysis of text and messages from on-line internet forums.

Object of the study

Russophonic migration to the UK has been a sizeable phenomenon in the last 10 years and is currently estimated at more than half a million. This group of migrants consists of Russian citizens as well as Russian-speaking migrants from the former Soviet republics, and this includes new members of the EU such as the Baltic States. Russian speaking migration represents a significant and constantly growing share of new settlers to the UK, although data collection and in-depth studies of this phenomenon are only now emerging. The thesis aims to contribute to this growing body of scholarship and to broader discussions concerning multiculturalism and diversity in both academic and policy circles. Yet, this study is firmly embedded within the disciplines of Russian Studies and Identity studies and attempts to explore the process of integration and separation of migrants through their self-representations and identity reconstruction/reproduction.

Research questions

The thesis is concerned with several research questions. Firstly, it investigates the extent to which dispositions of the native culture undermine the process of re-negotiation of migrants' identities, and whether the settlement in the host country can empower identity changes in a straightforward manner. Secondly, it focuses on discursive aspects of "othering" and examines which lines of cultural appropriation occur between the forum culture and the host culture, and how the distinctions between native and host culture are drawn on-line. Thirdly, the study looks at how

the object of knowledge in migrants' discourse is constructed and altered under the influences of their experiences, new cultural markers and perceptions of civic responsibilities and human rights in the host society.

Empirical material

On-line internet forums represent a widely influential and yet significantly under-researched medium for exploring the ways in which identity is negotiated and (re)formed. Given the growing influence of electronic media in communication and active participation of migrants in this form of communication, the decision was made to collect empirical material on-line. Web-forum represents a source of uncensored, anonymous (partially) and authentic data. The participants voluntarily engage in the communication, choose the topics of their messages, take part in lengthy discussions at their convenience, and keep in touch with geographically dispersed former compatriots. Therefore such data represent a vital source of information about migrants' communities. Texts and messages from several open access internet forums serving Russian-speaking migrants settled in the UK in 2002-2005 were collected, sampled and analysed.

The representativeness of the sample is assessed with regard to social limitations (such as restricted access to electronic communication of some groups of migrants, their age and computer literacy, opaque location of the participants), corpus limitations (constantly changing, non-linear data interconnected by electronic links), and ethical issues (difficulties in obtaining informed consent of participants, authorship rights etc.). The researcher was aware of the above limitations and accounts for them. Due to the aforementioned issues, generalisations are made in terms of contributors to the forums, rather than equating them with the whole body of migrants; internet forums are seen as "islands" of diaspora rather than the whole Russian-speaking diaspora in the UK.

Literature

The thesis complements a growing body of research concerning the concept of the “Other” (e.g. Petersoo 2007; Hoskings, 2002; Shopflin 1996, Lotman and Uspenskii 1984). This scholarship is connected to the dilemmas of sameness and difference, inclusion and exclusion, and integration and separation (Lucassen 2005, Morawska 2003). Although research exploring the identities of migrants from the new EU member states settling in the UK is emerging (e.g., Markova and Black 2007; Spencer et al., 2007), empirical studies of Russian-speaking migration flows are limited (for an exception see Kopnina 2005). At the time of writing no extensive research investigating Russian post-Soviet identity in electronic media existed, although several conference papers reflecting on the role of Internet communication for Russian-speaking migrants are known to the author (Smirnov 2005; Protasova 2004).

The Methodology

Conceptually, this thesis develops a theoretical framework linked with identity, self-representation and the process of “othering”. The methodological framework for this study combines Foucault’s analysis of discourse and Lotman’s ideas about translation between cultures. On-line discourse is seen as being conditioned by power relations in the native culture of migrants. Following Foucault, an object of knowledge created by this discourse is identified, and its surfaces of emergence and authorities of delimitation are discussed. Such an object of knowledge is seen within the dynamics of “othering”, and strategies and practices of discoursing it by participants are discerned. Drawing on Lotman, the thesis investigates possibilities of cultural appropriation of new features during contact with the host context, and elaborates on semiotic “translation” of new phenomena.

Innovative aspects of the study

A key element of the doctoral research resides in its linking at the level of identity negotiations of two aspects that are normally researched separately, namely, the impact of the cultural (and wider social context) of the host country on migrants and the legacy of the native culture (and their previous socialisation in the country of origin). Via the purposeful analysis of on-line data sources, the research aims at providing an insight into the complexity of the migrants' adaptation in the UK, the nature of their engagement with native culture and their diasporic bonding.

By critically analysing scholarship on international migration, diasporas and the history of Russian emigration, the study also calls for a holistic symbiosis of the aforementioned disciplines and attempts to apply existing typologies of international displacements to the contemporary migration movement of Russian-speakers.

A key empirical and methodological innovation of the research is its focus on migrants' native language communication on-line. In the absence of comparable studies, qualitative and quantitative sample frames for digital textual data (i.e. with respect to: sources, the types of communication, length of discussions, number of participants and the manner of their participation) were developed, and the use of such data for identity studies was critically assessed.

The thesis aims to prove that for Russian-speaking migrants in Britain the Internet emerges as an influential mass medium, which encompasses information from both host and native sources. The research is expected to contribute to current interdisciplinary research concerning issues of migration and identity, to justify the use of informal communications on-line for identity studies. The study is relevant for scholars working in media studies, discursive sociology, migration studies, nationalism and area studies.

CHAPTER 1

1.1. DIASPORAS AND MIGRATION. WAVES OF RUSSIAN MIGRATION

The chapter critically analyses scholarship on migration from Russia (Russian Empire, Soviet Union and Russian Federation) in historic perspective, discussing geography, participants and reasons for such displacements. Importantly, it will be attempted to correlate these migrations with similar processes on the global scale. It will be shown that mass migrations, where a substantial number of people leave their countries of origin for a great variety of reasons, was an important and, until recently, underestimated phenomenon. The question will be asked in which way contemporary international migration of Russian-speaking people is patterned with globalised displacements.

Further, the chapter contextualises contemporary international migrations of Russian speakers and focuses on specific features of globalised displacements empowered by technological developments, advanced means of communications and global media. How relevant is the question of national identity in the époque of so called trans-national living? What kind of bonding exists among contemporary migrants? It will be examined how contemporary realities challenge the concept of diaspora in terms of special forms of solidarities and networking. Different conceptualisation of contemporary diasporas will be noted, and relevant scholarship critically overviewed.

Finally building upon the typology of diasporas by Cohen, the chapter formulates a working classification of migration movements and diasporic bonding. This classification will be discussed here with respect to several waves of Russian migration. Emerging works on international Russian diaspora and migrants' communities in Britain will be analysed at the end of the chapter.

1.2. MIGRATION IN HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE: RUSSIA AND INTERNATIONAL DISPLACEMENTS

1.2.a. Migrations from antiquity to modernity

The earliest narratives of global migration document the 'scattering' of peoples as a result of invasions and the slave trade. There are many examples of such events in ancient times (for example Tromp, 1998, describes the historic displacements of Jews in antiquity) and in the early medieval period in Europe (for example during AD 300-900, called the Migration period in English-speaking literature, the mass migration of Germanic and later Slavic and Turkish tribes in the area which comprises contemporary Western, Southern and Central Europe was triggered by physical changes (e.g. climate) as well as social, economic and ethnic processes).

Even so, an accepted starting point for the analysis of migration is the 16th century, the Age of Discovery (Emmer, 1992). Mass displacements of that time could be mapped as simple trajectories: people were moved by force or they moved voluntarily from one place to another with the intention of either planning their return or deciding to choose their new location as home for the rest of their lives. The migrants' narratives tell of their being forced to leave their homeland, of their being strangers in their new location forever isolated from either homeland or the host community or even both.

Colonialism raised the number of migrants, but did not challenge the character of displacements.¹ Migration was a life-altering event and migrant communities were stable and secluded (as were the indigenous local communities of that period). Such displacements can be represented by a bipolar model of scattering and return (or dreams of return). Scholars note that during this period emigration from Europe prevailed over immigration², and argue that the scale of the displacements has been previously underestimated. The majority of migrants were Europeans for whom

¹ For example, by the mid 19th century approximately 10 million slaves had been transported from Africa to the Americas and these migrations were forced and of permanent character (Anstey, 1975). Between 1815 and 1925 over 25 million British people settled in the colonies, mostly in urban areas of these territories (King, 1990:74).

² It has been calculated that by 1914 approx. 65 million Europeans and 15 million African and Asian migrants had been involved in international migration (Emmer, 1992). It has been estimated that between 1815 and 1945 1.5 million immigrants settled in Britain while it lost 11.4 million emigrants (Panayi, 1994:23).

migration to colonies meant wider economic opportunities and hopes for improving their social status.

1.2.b. Colonial period of migration in Russia.

The Russian³ migration of the colonial period⁴ was motivated and structured in the same way, although several specific features may be discerned. These features are 1) after a late start, intensive labour migration of Russian peasants, workers and professionals within the borders of the Russian Empire; 2) multiethnic and often permanent migration of Russian-speaking people to the USA; 3) international migration from Russia to Europe of an urban and temporary character; 4) expressed occupational, educational and political motivations of emigration to Europe.⁵

1) Sizeable migration of Russian citizens did not occur before the late 19th century because of serfdom. Until the beginning of the 1880s the number of emigrants was less than 10,000 people per year, but by 1891 the number of economic migrants alone was more than 109,000 per year (Pushkareva 1997:144). The late 19th and the early 20th centuries can be referred to as the colonial period of industrial (or labour) migration in Russian history.

The majority of ethnically Russian peasants who were involved in resettlement at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries migrated within the borders of the Russian Empire. It is worth noting that the Russian Empire did not have any distant colonies (except Alaska). Its other colonies were the dependant territories incorporated within the Empire's boundaries (Poland, Finland, Kazan and Astrakhan, Crimea, Georgia, Armenia, as well as the whole of Caucasus, Baltic areas, Turkestan, etc.). Russia itself also possessed vast under-developed territories such as Siberia⁶. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century a state-financed

³ The discussion of the notion of 'Russian' in this study can be found in 2.3.

⁴ Here the colonial period as it refers to migration is understood to be the period when displacements were motivated and defined by the existence and development of colonies.

⁵ The above typology is created in this study on the basis of Kelly (1998), Pushkareva (1997), Popova (1998) and Bondarev (2001).

⁶ "The North and Siberia with Alaska have been colonized and mastered not so much by the state, but by people, peasant families" (Likhachev 1990:4).

programme of peasant resettlement to Siberia and the Far East of Russia (the so called Stolypin reforms) was implemented with families being subsidised and granted lands in Siberia under this programme (see Pallot, 1999). The Russian government practiced forced migration of criminals and politically “unsafe elements” to Siberia (compare the practice of sending convicts to Australia by the UK government), with a significant share of participants in nationalistic movements in the colonies of the Russian Empire. At the same time, industrialisation of the Urals and Ukraine, railway construction in the southern territories of the Russian Empire and geological research in various places acted as incentives for the migration of highly skilled workers from Central Russia to the dependant territories. Kliuchevskii examined the history of Russia through a prism of colonization of territories and considered that “resettlements, colonization of the country have been the key-issue of our history” (Kliuchevskii 1956: 32). Thus numerous migratory flows associated with this period and directed into the colonies of the Russian Empire were considered internal migration and did not influence or join the patterns of international displacements of the period.

During this period the Russian Empire has been considered a place of immigration (labour, professional and, after the French Revolution, political) as well as emigration. Since the 18th century Dutch, Scottish and German immigrants had started settling there, while later in the 19th century French migrants had followed.

2) In terms of international emigration, several disjunctions in the displacement patterns to the USA and Europe shall be noted. Economic emigrants to the USA⁷ were mainly peasants and unskilled workers and the majority emigrated permanently. These migrants were of different ethnic origins, and about 97% were not ethnic Russian. The share of Russian nationals among migrants may be even smaller than 3% taking into account that people of various ethnic origins emigrating from the Carpathian region, Galicia, Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic regions often

⁷ One estimate is that, during the period 1861-1915, more than 4.2 million people left the Russian Empire, with 94% permanently emigrating to the USA (Kabuzan 1997). However estimates of such migration vary. Popov, for example, estimates emigration from the Russian Empire to the New World during the period 1900-1917 at 7 million people (Popov, 1998).

registered in the host country as Russian (Okorokov 2001:30). Emigrants of Jewish, Polish, Lithuanian and German origin were often registered as Russian because of their citizenship (Kabuzan 1997:307). Nitoburg (1996:91) argues that the majority of ethnic Russians migrating to the USA were religious refugees belonging to various orthodox minorities (molokans, dukhobors, Old Believers). When discussing the pre-revolutionary Russian-speaking migration (and particularly emigration to the USA) one should specify the multi-ethnic character of displacements of people that had been socializing in the Russian language and culture.

3-4) Unlike emigration to the USA, Russian migration to Europe had from the very beginning an urban character and had been limited for decades to the aristocracy and middle class. Traditional historiography states the beginnings of such migration either as one-off stories of famous political refugees like Guetman Mazepa from the court of Peter the Great and Prince Andrei Kurbskii from the court of Ivan the Terrible (see Fennell 1966), or of occupational or educational temporary migration in the 19th century (or a combination of the above) (see Pivovarov 1999). Thus emigration from Russia to Europe has been connected to the narratives of political protest, intellectual search and education. This fact explains the high number of libraries, cultural and political organisations and periodicals which were founded by Russian migrants to Europe at that time. During the period 1855-1917 there were 109 periodicals in Geneva, 95 in Paris, 42 in London and 17 in Berlin (Okorokov 2001:35).

The majority of Russian citizens who resided in Europe could be classified as temporary migrants, even if their absence from the Russian Empire was often lengthy. Such a situation was created by the Russian emigration laws, which restricted the period that Russian passport-holders could live abroad to 5 years, but granted permission to stay longer if applied for (Okorokov 2001:41)⁸. If an individual stayed longer without permission their property was confiscated and, were

⁸ According to Speranskii's codification of the Russian law in the 1920s and 1830s.

they to return, the person was sent to Siberia for life. These rules created a semi-legal and semi-permanent unsettled situation for many migrants⁹.

There are differing opinions as to whether one observes a phenomenon of the Russian diaspora during this period. Kelly argues that, although in the 19th century and earlier Russia had a history of exiles and dissidents, nowhere did Russians form any diaspora of significant numbers (Kelly, 1998:234). This contradicts the opinion of a number of authors, writing about “sizable Russian diaspora with its own infrastructure of organisations, newspapers and magazines, archives and libraries” (Okorokov 2001:41) in the second part of the 19th century. At the same time, the size and importance of Russian emigration before the revolution is still often ignored in modern Russian-language literature on migration. For example, Kuzmicheva writes: “The mass character of the First wave [of emigration] is an absolutely new phenomenon for Russia. Englishmen sent their convicts and dissidents to America, the West Indies and Australia [...]. And only in Russia we did not know of this phenomenon outside of our native land”. (Kuzmicheva 2000:109).

It is possible to reflect on these different opinions, having regard to the constantly growing volume of research on migration of the period and the extensive publications and new findings in the field. Some scholars (for example Suomela 2004:29), analysing literature recently published in Russia, came to the conclusion that sometimes the awakening of interest in Russian Zarubezhie may signify a search for answers to some acute contemporary problems. The statements about the existence or non-existence of the Russian diaspora before the revolution may also be based on a different understanding of the notion: although the 19th century Russian community abroad possessed a developed social and cultural infrastructure, these communities did not pass on their attachments to Russia to the following generations and there is little evidence that these communities embraced new forced migrants from Russia. The failure to pass the traditions and infrastructure of the diaspora to the next wave of migrants may be explained by the ideological background of the

⁹ These rules created the phenomenon of “nevozvrashchentsy” – people who took a decision to stay abroad without any official permission. One of the first of them was Professor Pecherin, a converted catholic who became “nevozvrashchenets” in 1836.

migrations: whereas the pre-revolutionary Russian diaspora in Europe was based on anti-Tsarist, pro-revolutionary sentiments (Pushkareva 1992:18), refugees of the post-revolutionary period shared anti-Soviet aspirations (for example Suomela 2004, Kelly 1998).

1.2.c. Russian emigrations of the 20th century (after 1917).

As summarised by Zaionchkovskaia and Vishnevskii (1992), emigration from the USSR in the twentieth century is divided into three distinct waves, the first two forced and the third voluntary¹⁰. The first wave followed World War I and the Russian Revolution, the second occurred during World War II and in its aftermath, while the third began in the 1950s.¹¹

The immediate post-1917 emigration from Russia had a forced character. People were escaping from political prosecution rather than hunger and the dangers of war-time. Unlike the economic migrants and religious refugees heading to the USA at the end of the 19th century, the migrants at this period settled temporarily in Europe (mainly Berlin, Paris, Sofia, Prague), China (Harbin) or the Middle East (Istanbul) (Nazarov 2001). According to the League of Nations there were 1.169 million migrants from Russia immediately after the revolution and the civil war (Kovalevskii 1971:12-13)¹². During the following decade emigration from Russia continued with a significant number of legal and illegal emigrants (including *nevozvrashchentsy*) in the 1930s. According to the definition of the League of Nations, a Russian refugee was a person originating from the Russian Empire who did not enjoy the protection of the Soviet Union or any former territory of the Russian Empire. Although this definition stated the national, rather than ethnic, character of the refugee problem, ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, followed by Jews, comprised the majority of emigrants (Suomela 2004:36).

¹⁰ In contemporary literature the second emigration (1939-47) is estimated at 8-10 million people, while the third (1948-1990) is quoted as 1.1 million.

¹¹ In contemporary literature this typology is not unanimously accepted. For example, Iontsev (2001) distinguishes between 7 periods of migration, Drobizheva (1998) speaks about 4 waves of migration with the third being an Exodus of dissidents and the fourth a "post Soviet" wave.

¹² Other estimations of Russian emigration give the following numbers of emigrants in the 1920s: 2.5 million (Red Cross statistics analysed by Von Rimscha 1924), 10 million (Kovalevskii 1971), up to 1 million (Simpson, 1939:15).

Socially the Russian diaspora represented a diverse structure which is reflected in a number of memoirs. For example, Zinaida Gippius described the Russian diaspora of that time contemporary Russian society in miniature: “Russia is the same abroad as back home: nobility, civil servants, trades people, ...clergy, intelligentsia in all its activities – political, cultural, scientific, technical etc., army (from high ranks to privates), working people [...] – representatives of all classes, situations and ownership, even of all three (or four) generations – are on hand here in the Russian emigration” (quoted in Freinkman-Khrustaleva *et al*, 1995:65). Suomela (2004) points out that the number of wealthy emigrants was not significant, but the educational level of the refugees was very high: 75% had completed full secondary education. Lebedeva analyses the diversified social and cultural infrastructure (schools, parishes, even universities, libraries, professional bodies etc.) of the Russian diaspora of the time and underlines a tendency towards self-organisation of emigrants in the diaspora (2001:114) and a strong opposition to naturalisation¹³. Researchers also underline the special role of the Russian-language press in preserving Russian culture and the emergence of the phenomenon of Russia Abroad, *Zarubezhnaia Rossia* (Raeff:1990)¹⁴.

The second wave of emigration is the least researched due to its political and historical ambiguity. While in Soviet sources the emigrants were labelled “traitors of war”, archives and memoirs of emigrants as well as unbiased studies draw wider research perspectives¹⁵. The post-World War II escape from the Soviet regime comprised political emigrants, using a chance to leave Russia, national minorities repressed under Stalin, prisoners of war, displaced people and collaborators with the Nazis. Ethnic Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians dominated this flow (Zemskov 1991:21), but this can be explained by the extent of

¹³ It is important to note in this connection that Great Britain (and London in particular) was an exception to this tendency. Here the process of integration of Russian refugees and emigrants was much faster than anywhere else: 9,500 out of 15,000 Russian migrants to the UK (during the period 1921-1931) applied for and held British citizenship, while “denaturalisation” was considered the greatest danger by the Russian post-revolutionary migrants elsewhere (Sabennikova 2002:11).

¹⁴ The notion of Russia Abroad is discussed in 2.3.

¹⁵ Struve (1996), for example, claimed that they received ideological and financial support from the governments and institutions of Western countries. Others described forced repatriation of emigrants and difficulties in settling (Zukov and Zukova 1998).

forced repatriation being much lower for the natives of territories claimed by the USSR in 1939. Due to the nature of emigration the second wave comprised large numbers of people of active working age and was socially diverse. The main destinations were the USA, Great Britain and Australia (*ibid.*)

The third wave beginning in the 1950s mainly consisted of some ethnic minorities (Jews, ethnic Germans, ethnic Poles, ethnic Greeks), and political dissidents, although these groupings overlap (Codagnone 1998:3). Socially, emigrants of middle class with high levels of education (intelligentsia) dominated. Later on religious emigrants (Ukrainian Catholics and Russian Baptists) joined the wave. A special feature of the third wave of migration is its geographical dispersion and duration (half a century)¹⁶. The main motivation for these migrations was dissatisfaction with the conditions of life and lack of freedoms in the USSR. This emigration left extensive archives; its history is traceable through a variety of periodicals, published by migrants.

Thus emigration from Russia to Europe has produced several sizeable waves of migration, but due to the diverse political character of these displacements, its forced and permanent character, emigration from the USSR did not conform to the global migration patterns of the post-colonial period, which was characterised by voluntary and often temporary resettlements.

1.2.d Contemporary international migration of Russian-speakers: geographical patterns and participants

The character of the Russian-speaking migration has dramatically changed since 1991, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and changes in legislation allowing free travel for Russian citizens. Economic challenges (crises and new possibilities), as well as the manifestation of social and ethnic tensions following the

¹⁶ The number of migrants was limited before the full liberalisation of emigration. Under the Soviet regime the number of exit visas for emigrants was restricted to 3,000 annually (Voynova and Ushkalov 1994:41). In practice, however, exceptions were made to this rule, and between 1973 and 1980, following Western diplomatic pressure, the regime allowed 340,000 people to emigrate (Codagnone 1998: 5).

demise of the Soviet Union, led to a sizeable migration movement. Despite various concerns emerging in the early 1990s regarding the possibility of large-scale population transfers, they have not been realised (*Trends...60*)¹⁷. Instead the patterns of global migration have been reproduced in the new Russia. Unlike the refugees who made up the several previous waves of emigration, the current displacements of Russian-speaking people are not limited to certain ethnic or social features, and comprise a variety of participants with a variety of reasons for migration. Emigration, both temporary and permanent, is characterised by the urban background of migrants with the majority being families of active working age.¹⁸

Several trends may be noted amongst the geographical locations within Europe of the migrants:

- a) Some European countries (Germany, Finland, and Greece) allow emigrants from the Soviet Union to settle due to various government policies, attracting a large number of Russian-speaking, but ethnically non-Russian migrants and their families. These displacements tend to be permanent, although some migrants return to Russia or relocate to another country (see for example, Fedorov 1999).
- b) Some European regions previously thought of as areas of emigration are now considered areas of immigration (e.g. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Portugal) and the proportion of Russian-speaking people among immigrants to these countries is high. Various types of migration are represented here: from labour migration of domestic workers to migration of members of the business elite.
- c) The number of Russian-speaking migrants is growing in the majority of European countries (including Spain, Italy, France, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Belgium), while the social portrait of migrants, reasons for migration, integration tendencies and character of networking between countries vary greatly (Kopnina, 2005).

¹⁷ The sizable migration of Russian speakers in the so-called “near abroad” (former Soviet territories) is noted.

¹⁸ In 1992 40% of Russian emigrants originated from Moscow and St Petersburg. According to 2002 statistics 20% of emigrants hold university degrees, while the proportion of people with higher education in Russia is 13% of the population. The proportion of emigrants with children (22.4%) is comparable with the figure for the Russian Federation (20.7%).(www.demoscope.ru)

The problem of how new Russian-speaking migrant communities reproduce diasporic solidarities has to be discussed with regard to the contemporary features of the globalised process of migration and integration.

1.3. GLOBALISED INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS' COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE

1.3.a Features of contemporary migration

Although the scale and dynamism of early migration has probably been underestimated, global migration today is statistically a more significant phenomenon than ever before. The multiplication and acceleration of migratory movements is one of the tendencies in global migration. ('Trends in International Migration, 2000: 46-47')¹⁹. Migration is a social phenomenon affecting all areas of the global economy, political development and culture, but at the same time it represents an unsolved problem in terms of quantitative calculations. In the introduction to the 1989 UN Demographic Yearbook it was stated that 'although international migration may well in many cases entail a legal procedure it remains the most difficult of demographic phenomena to define and measure correctly' (1989 UN Demographic Yearbook 1990:95).

A share of these difficulties is rooted in the temporary and multidirectional character of modern displacements. Global tendencies in modern migration patterns will be investigated here in order to specify their influence on the processes of adaptation and cultural integration of migrants. In particular, this subchapter will concentrate on specific features of contemporary migration (multiple but temporary displacements, and social polarisation of migrant communities). The differences from previous

¹⁹ In UN statistics, tourists, excursionists, visitors, seasonal workers, students, refugees, diplomatic and consular representatives are excluded from the term "emigrants". The UN defines long-term migrants as follows (these definitions apply equally to all population categories whether nationals or not, foreign-born or not): Long-term emigrants are residents or persons who have resided continuously in the country for more than one year. SOPEMI (French acronym for 'Continuous Reporting System on Migration') statistics include seasonal workers and refugees. These are some of the reasons why SOPEMI statistics often show marked differences from those in the Demographic Yearbook of the UN.

generations in the number of migrants, their roles in society, reasons for displacement, means of communications and migratory trajectories will be specified.

The current waves of global migration are structured differently from the earlier displacements of the slave trade and the international labour migration during the first phase of industrialisation. Scholars argue that the current phase of global migration can best be described as 'a turbulent, a fluid, but structured movement, with multidirectional and reversible trajectories' (Papastergiadis, 2000:7). The migration associated with globalisation²⁰ is often temporary and participants are able to return and/or re-migrate to another country.

The temporary migration growth is determined by the flexible specialisation of modern labour. Universal technologies in production, distribution and communication promote the mobility of labour. Even various jobs traditionally perceived as rooted and connected with a locality can no longer be classified as such: for example, labour migration has become an important element in mining communities and miners out of work have to be internationally mobile to stay employed. Dawson and Fog-Olwig concluded that "attachment to a mining industry that ... involved intermittent labour migration" appeared to be a stronger index of belonging to a mining community than "unbroken residence (in one place) through time" (Dawson, 1999:217, Fog-Olwig, 1999:230). Communities can no longer assume that employment will be local and flexibility of an individual's attachment to place and community appears as a psychological consequence of the globalised

²⁰ Globalization is understood as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (Giddens 1990:64). Scholte argues that globalization is a "buzz word" and at least five broad definitions of 'globalization' can be found in the literature. *Globalization as internationalization* describes cross-border relations between countries and growth in international exchange and interdependence. *Globalization as liberalization* refers to 'a process of removing government-imposed restrictions on movements between countries in order to create an "open", "borderless" world economy' (Scholte 2000: 16). *Globalization as universalization* is used in the sense of spreading the same objects and experiences to people everywhere. *Globalization as westernization or modernization* refers to the same features, but claims that the western social structures destroy pre-existent cultures. *Globalization as deterritorialization* entails a "reconfiguration of geography, so that social space is no longer wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, distances and borders" (2000: 15-17).

economy. People are forced to accept the inevitability of the mobility of the workplace and at the same time the redundancy of traditional skills. International migration today is often characterised as being of a temporary nature based on employment-seeking.

International migration today is perceived by scholars as not only an economically and politically determined tendency, but is considered in a wider cultural context of ideologies and motivations. Until lately, widely accepted concepts have described migration purely in terms of cause and consequence of other forces: the models of displacements presupposed a determining link between the migrants' needs and the demands of the labour market of the developed economies. These concepts have tended to explain the human movement in terms of a 'water pump' or 'push-pull' system. Since the 1990s such approaches have been criticised as outdated and mechanistic. The proliferation of surveys (SOPEMI) on international displacements was very important in framing a new conceptual framework. The surveying helps to identify some of the common structures and complex networks without reproducing the binaries of earlier models. The possibility for migrants themselves to take conscious decisions on where and for how long to stay in order to improve life prospects changes the perceptions of modern displacements: 'Curiosity, wishes to get knowledge of different ways of living, a desire to pursue opportunities that might improve personal life chances, are some of the factors that remain in the heart of impetus behind these migrations (both documented and undocumented)' (Brah, 1996:178).

In their search for models of migration researchers tend to adopt a variety of theoretical approaches that incorporate elements from political economy (Sassen 1991) as well as cultural (Giddens 1990) and social studies (Castells and Miller, 2000).

Modern literature on migration (Papastergiadis 2000, Castles and Davidson 2000, Castles and Miller 1998, Bhabha 1995 *etc*) highlights the significance of the studies of gender, occupational and cultural identity, the informal and hybrid conjunctures

between different cultures and lifestyles, and their influence on the process of movement and settlement. Scholars (*above*) criticise the traditional notion of 'economic migrants' because it does not describe new types of migrants such as high-qualified specialists, entrepreneurs and students. At the same time global events increasingly render untenable the distinctions between so-called political and economic refugees. For example the classification of people that leave their homeland as refugees and/or under the influence of unfavourable circumstances (military actions, hunger, instability and political strife) is unclear. The distinctions between forced or voluntary migration seem to be more relevant and easier to comprehend in modern migration studies, but even this division is far from unproblematic.

The increase of 'foreigners' contribution to the labour force' with consequently the growth 'of temporary migration of skilled and highly skilled workers' and at the same time 'differentiation in the economic, social, cultural backgrounds of migrants' are other important issues of international migration. (Trends in International Migration, 2000: 46-47). The notion of temporary migrants includes professional and business elites as well as individuals in unfavourable situations who became low-paid temporary workers in services, agriculture and industry. Low-skilled service industry workers or manual workers are lacking traditional networks of support and often have no access to the formal structures of social welfare. Professional and business elites represent the other end of the spectrum. The social space of this type of migrant is not confined to the boundaries of a particular nation-state. Bauman distinguishes between those he calls tourists (members of the elite groups) and vagabonds. "Tourists" travel by choice taking advantage of all forms of mobility available. "Vagabonds", the 'mutants of post-modern evolution' (Bauman, 1998:93-97), know that they are not able to settle anywhere they wish since they are not guaranteed a welcome everywhere. David Morley develops this idea arguing that 'the tourists move because they find the global space attractive, the vagabonds - because they find their locality inhospitable' (Morley 2000: 203).

Diasporas created by contemporary migration represent intensely polarised social spaces. Massey mentions that displacements as social experiences for refugees or unemployed migrants differ from those of the middle class person who migrates and settles with relative ease (Massey, 1997:88). Some researchers (for example Castles and Davidson) insist that individual integration has generally proved attainable only for professional elites (Castles and Davidson, 2000:79). Inequalities within migrant communities of various ethnic backgrounds are reinforced by the urban character of modern migration. For the study of Russian diaspora formed by predominantly urban migration, the concept of so-called 'global cities' (Sassen 2002), that is global decision-making and control centres connected with each other rather than with their own domestic economies, is very important. These cities constitute contested territories, polarised socially and mixed culturally, where distant cultures and socially opposite structures meet each other on a regular basis²¹. Due to psychological strife among individuals and simultaneously the cosmopolitan lifestyle of such cities, they become a fertile soil for networking between migrants of the same origin²².

Whilst international migration has facilitated the critique of the nation-state, the concentration of people, technologies and media in urban centres has stimulated communication between migrants and sprouted diasporisation or transnationalism, but this process itself has not necessarily produced greater levels of freedom and cross-cultural understanding. Intense migration results in the development of migrant communities everywhere, the question of integration within both the diasporic community and the host society being of special importance.

1.3.b Illusiveness of borders: deterritorialised information and rhizomic networks

²¹ Kopnina in her studies of contemporary Russian communities in London and Amsterdam used ideas of Sassen to show the nature of urban networking of migrants from the former USSR (Kopnina 2005).

²² Although transnational connections are also developed by rural populations, networking across national borders in terms of agencies, flexibility of information and the psychology of migrants is more often an urban phenomenon. Thus "global cities" represent the main junctions of these networks.

Contemporary diasporas are influenced by cultural and social tendencies in the globalised world. The temporary character of displacements and multiple migrations contribute to the changes of perception of the close community, as well as the relationships between community and individual. Due to displacements being such common phenomena, people are introduced to diasporic narratives without migrating anywhere. Transnational networking by means of new technologies permits the constant keeping in touch with correspondents across borders and challenges the notion of diaspora as an embodiment of traditionalism and isolation (see Gilroy 1993). It will be shown further in this chapter that instead of the traditional absolutisation of differences between *local* and *global*, *we* and *the other*, the new realities promote a variety of networking with a multiplicity of cultural affiliations.

Globalising tendencies challenge traditional perceptions of “far” and “close”, “foreign” and “traditional”, and change self-perceptions of migrants in the host countries. Whilst people cross political and geographical borders, cultural symbols themselves move around the world by means of material and cultural products and information. As Jean-Francois Lyotard wrote: 'One listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo, and 'retro' clothes in Hong Kong' (Lyotard, 1986:76). Clifford reflects on this process stating that 'you don't have to leave home to be confronted with the concrete challenges of hybrid agency ... the outside world is guaranteed to find you' (Clifford, 1997: 367). Eagleton agrees that “whereas the migrant travels the world, the world travels to the cosmopolitan” (Eagleton, 2000:76). The world seems “rhizomic”²³ (Deleuze and Guattari 1986:6) but at the same time evokes narratives of rootlessness (see Morley 2000).

²³ Rhizome is a figurative term used by Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze in their book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* to describe non-hierarchical networks of all kinds. This concept is used, for example, when defining connections via the Internet: "Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order. ... not every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature: semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status." (Douglas Kellner, 2003:3)

Ideas and products developed in one place are increasingly promoted and circulated on a global scale. Education, ethics and life styles are also included in the process of unification. Eagleton perceives this state of the world as “when it becomes difficult to say whether we are living in a world in which everything is dramatically different or is increasingly identical” (Eagleton 2000:73). People are introduced to various national discourses without migrating or travelling anywhere and as a result are unable to accept distinctive cultural traditions as a frame of reference.

At the same time there are structures that mediate between differences and articulate them into a narrative (Eagleton 2000:55). Some researchers (Hannerz 1996) underline mutual cross-cultural penetration of knowledge and styles and commoditization of cultural symbols: the products and the ideas from outside the communities are introduced through the global market and adapted by them. The emergence of global media industries also promotes cross-cultural information. On the one hand, these technologies allow migrants to feel at home, keep tuned in to life in their native countries while staying in very distant places. On the other hand, cultures, instead of being bound by a territory, are transported everywhere in form of concepts, images and texts. If earlier migrants (and, to a lesser extent, travellers) were, perhaps, the only social agency introducing foreign symbols and different cultural practices to local communities, in the contemporary world the penetration of “otherness” in the form of cultural symbols is no longer dependent on the physical presence of strangers.

New means of communications embody these changes. Meyrowitz wrote that they create communities with “no sense of place” (Meyrowitz, 1996). Due to technological advances, national systems of mass media which used to 'constitute the nation as a symbolic system of common associations' (Morse, 1998:208) can barely be understood as such. They are undergoing a process of modification: cable, satellite, digital broadcasting and Internet services expand the range of new media outlets; various media enterprises are integrating their operations at both national and international levels; the Internet creates its own cultural production and at the same time incorporates texts of traditional periodicals or links periodicals to each

other or to interpersonal electronic messages. Boundaries between different media are becoming increasingly fluid, almost elusive.²⁴ The worldwide web, due to its non- or trans- territoriality, plays the role of a quasi-medium in the process and reflects the transnational existence of migrants today. The role of the Internet as a global socially-charged mass medium is growing as the access to the Net worldwide improves and the auditorium becomes more and more comprehensive. The fact that a generation of active computer users is entering the decision making age invests the Internet with an impact as a news and opinions provider.

The new communication technologies challenge the ideas of separate and local existence of migrant communities²⁵. For example, Miller and Slater, researching communications between dispersed Trinidadians, discuss the impact of the national convergence of cultures on people, and the role of technologies and their accessibility in these connections, noting that “the boundaries of market, nations, cultures and technologies become increasingly permeable, and require people to think of themselves as actors on ever more global stages” (Miller and Slater 2000:18-19). The size and character of contemporary displacements of the population, the crossing of national borders on an everyday basis, and the cross-cultural circulation of symbols by means of the new “borderless” media all modify diasporic relationships. And the ideas of belonging and the concept of home in communities are being challenged by a new understanding of borders and isolation.

Deterritorialisation of migrants’ culture (Canclini 1999) reflects deterritorialisation of the information flow, which assists the development of multiple communities’ memberships and transnational networking (e.g. Schlesinger 2002, Bimber 1998, Mitra 1997). People are able to keep informed and be in touch with various ethnic narratives which affect their tastes and challenge their cultural frames of reference. By means of new technologies, both the displaced population and the indigenous one

²⁴ For example, Deegan and Tanner write about resource sharing across media: traditional periodicals allow the re-use of articles by various web-sites, including their being displayed on personal web-pages (Deegan and Tanner 2002:160). Researchers comment on the collapse of conventional and familiar distinctions among media and describe both the convergence of different media in terms of distribution and aesthetics (Slevin 2000, Bolter and Grusin 2000) and, at the same time, the fragmentation which implies a growing differentiation of experiences (Giddens 1990).

²⁵ See also this thesis 2.5.

are subjected to the introduction of foreign symbols and cultural practices from elsewhere. At the same time the rapid development of technologies - newer, cheaper, and more efficient modes of communication and transport - allows migrants to live transnationally, maintaining their original home-based relationships and interests both 'here' and 'there'. These complex flows of meanings, images and practices are crossing borders, spreading into new territories, thus challenging locally conditioned identities and establishing new networks across borders (Hannerz 1996)²⁶. For example, the Internet forums created by Russian-speaking migrants in a particular country serve as a means of communication for people who have not migrated and are not planning to migrate, as well as for those migrants who live in other countries.

Scholars have discussed a crisis of the territorial and national construction of a community (Bauman 1998, Castles 1991, Ohmae 1994, Schopflin 2000, etc.). The elusiveness of informational borders has challenged the perception of the host culture by minorities (indigenous minority groups and migrant communities). Contemporary cultural politics and citizenship jurisdictions mean that members of 'other' cultural groups (ethnic minorities, whether traditionally settled within the given territory or immigrated there) do not have to adopt the cultural values and norms or copy the indigenous way of life of the majority in order to enjoy full citizenship²⁷. An increase in migration and globalisation of various social practices has instigated shifts in official political and ideological practices, not only in the receiving, but also in the sending countries²⁸.

²⁶ However it would be an exaggeration to suppose that technological advances have caused the phenomenon of such networking. It was not technologically determined, but the technology has facilitated the expansion of the connections of modern migrant communities.

²⁷ Papastergiadis (2000) notes that such issues as the definition of criminal code, the rules for immigration, the health services, the evaluation of artistic production and the formulation of academic curricula can no longer be addressed without some reference to minority cultures.

²⁸ Traditionally migration was believed to damage sending territories. Currently attention has shifted to the benefits that these countries get as a result of remittances. Kofi Annan said in a newspaper interview that in 2002 alone migrants transferred to the developing countries more than \$88 billion, 54% more than the \$57 billion of aid received from the developed countries. "Finally, all countries benefit from migration". Whilst some sending countries in recent years have developed a more positive attitude to their emigrants, and others have admitted the impact of migrant remittances on local economies and labour markets (Poland, Ukraine), a third group of countries have made institutional changes, in particular revising the role of the state in controlling and monitoring migration and defining citizenship (Russia, Latvia). The most debated aspects at present concern rethinking the rights and obligations surrounding migration, including migrants' loyalties and

Some scholars believe that we live in a post-national world (Appadurai 1997, Ohmae 1995), whilst others argue that “the European talk of the death of the national-state sounds odd in the other parts of the globe” (Morley 2000:204). Castells argues that we are shifting from thinking in terms of boundaries to thinking in terms of networks:

“The inclusion of most cultural expressions within the integrated communication system based in digitized electronic production, distribution, and exchange of signals has major consequences for social forms and processes. On the one hand, it weakens considerably the symbolic power of traditional senders external to the system, transmitting through historically encoded social habits: religion, morality, authority, traditional values, and political ideology. Not that they disappear, but they are weakened unless they recode themselves in the new system, where their power becomes multiplied.... On the other hand, the new communication system radically transforms space and time, the fundamental dimension of human life. Localities become disembodied from their cultural, historical, geographical meaning, and reintegrated into functional networks, or into image collages, inducing a space of flows that substitutes for the space of places”(Castells, 2000: 406).

1.3.c. Transnational living and self-imposed borders

The emergence of various social networks across state and territories does not necessarily imply the disappearance of cultural divisions or their insignificance but can even highlight the problem of self-diasporisation and the self-imposition of some borders.

Scholars approach epistemological questions of borders from significantly different positions. Ohmae (1995) speaks about regional borders instead of national ones. Huntington (1996) predicts that in the immediate future the borders generating conflicts and aggression will be those between different civilisations (cultures) rather

responsibilities in connection with the native and receiving states (see Castles 2000; Castles and Davidson 2000; Faist 1999).

than those between nations. In his popular book *Clash of Civilizations*²⁹ he argues that we see the emergence of a “civilisation-based” world order where societies allegedly sharing cultural affinities co-operate with each other. He broadly systematises civilisations as “major cultures - Western, Eastern Orthodox, Latin American, Islamic, Japanese, Chinese, Hindu and African”. Huntington is preoccupied with the future of increasingly “de-Westernized” international relations, and presumes that some of the aforementioned civilisations reject the ideals of democracy, human rights, liberty, the rule of law and the separation of the church and state, ideals which the author associates with the West exclusively.

Mignolo and Tlostanova strongly question the logic of that classification: “*Borders* will be in the twenty-first century what *frontiers* were in the nineteenth. Frontiers were conceived as the line indicating the last point in the relentless march of civilization. On the one side of the frontiers was civilization; on the other, nothing; just barbarism or emptiness. The march of civilization and the idea of the frontiers created a geographic and bodygraphic divide. Certain areas of the planet were designated as the location of the barbarians, and since the eighteenth century, of the primitives. In one stroke, bodies were classified and assigned a given place on the planet. But who had the authority to enact such a classification?” (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006). Tlostanova highlights her disagreements with “the canonical Western epistemic model”, which underlines Huntingdon’s position, and criticises the “Russian mimicking variants” of Huntingdon’s ideas. At the same time she does not question the existence of “trans-cultural” divisions and borders (Tlostanova 2003). She agrees that the constructs of the globalised world can be seen as non-territorial but they are not borderless.

Contemporary borders can be understood in terms of “multiple and virtual vectors of energy, power, desire and capital”, rather than political or national divisions (Herron 1993). Herron suggests that “we will no longer go to the borders, they become us” (*ibid*). Castels and Davidson suggest that “culture - in terms of education, occupation, urban or rural upbringing, etc is thought to predict social behaviour and personal beliefs or character in the way in which phenotypic or essentialist

²⁹ See also the discussion influenced by Huntington in 4.2 and 4.4.

differences used to be”. (Castels and Davidson, 2000:124). They believe that differences between immigrants and local people in language and traditions today seem less significant than the common acceptance of a contemporary culture or local understanding of “civilisation” which is often defined in general and normative terms of “arts, urban living, civic politics, complex technologies, and the like” (Eagleton 2000:9)³⁰. Hence the majority of people in the world (including migrants) are socialised within a distinctive national tradition and possess national and ethnic solidarities, the interplay of specific cultural interpretations reflecting “borders within” and drawing attention to the complex links within diasporas.

It has been demonstrated in the following empirical studies that if territorial or state divisions do not represent any tangible institutional or political obstacles, people themselves infuse borders with additional identity meanings. Thranhardt (1995) in his study on double citizenship noted the importance of official national labelling: he showed that for most people, citizenship has both an instrumental and an identitarian aspect. Other studies also prove that even a passport may hold a special meaning, signifying migrants’ belonging and maybe acting as a symbolic identity and a security warrant of their independent status in the new country (for example, Colic-Peisker and Walker, 2003, Carter 2004). Meinhof and Galasinski (2002) conducted a case study in border communities of Guben (Gubin), a town divided between Poland and Germany, and came to the conclusion that, because of European enlargement, the inhabitants are reconfiguring their east-west identities. Thus the question of cultural identity as a predicament of cultural borders’ construction has been shifted from the margins to the centre of contemporary research.

1.4. THE CONCEPT OF DIASPORA

STUDYING DIASPORAS

The word *diaspora* appeared in Greek translations (Septuagint) of the Bible and is etymologically derived from the Greek term *diasperien*, from *dia-*, across and – *sperien*, “to sow or scatter seeds” (Durham 1999:23). Describing Jews who had left

³⁰ It is worth noting the use of the word “civilization” is far from being unproblematic.

Judah (Judea) after the Babylonian invasion in the sixth century BC and were living in various territories, scattered through other lands, the word originally had religious connotations, but later was used for naming “displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, or exile.” (Brazier and Mammur 2003:3). The etymology of the word *diaspora* justifies the use of this notion for the studies of contemporary virtual communities of Russian-speaking migrants: people that have been “seeded” in new localities gathering together to mark symbolically their common origin.

From the very beginning the term “diaspora” has been marked by a certain ambiguity: narratives of exile, isolation and nostalgia have been connected with forced relocations, while the connotations of being seeded in a new place have reflected hopes of a new future for the migrant population. The notion of diaspora had been historically dominated by the migrants’ self-perception of being different and isolated as strangers following their displacement, but the term has attained new cultural and social conceptualisation. The word *diaspora* is still used for a variety of forced displacements, including people seeking refuge from areas of military, ethnic or economic disasters, but nowadays the meaning has been extended to include the so-called globalised migration marked by the voluntary character of the dispersion and the significant volume of diverse contacts with migrants in other countries and their native territories. International migration, global mass media and advances in communications produce special forms of solidarities and networking. Connections via new means of communication, as well as the temporary character of displacements, have changed the understanding of living in a diaspora and have contributed to new discussions about migrant identities³¹.

Certainly, various connections between people of the same origin, living outside their historic territories, are not a new phenomenon, and the cultural heritage produced by generations of migrants of various origins (as well as cross-sections between mainland and migrant cultures) has been appreciated by a number of researchers (the scholarship covering the subject is extensive and comprises for example, Raeff 1990,

³¹ See Chapter 2.

Kopnina 2005, Snowman 2004, Fabre and Benesch, 2004, Levy and Weingrod 2005). However social and technological realities of the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty first centuries have changed the understanding and everyday experiences of living in a diaspora; contributed to new discussions about migrant identities. This chapter is concerned with the contemporary concepts of diaspora and with solidarities produced among people separated by large distances, but digitally connected to each other on an everyday basis.

The concept of diaspora is associated with the ability of migrants to retain or reconstruct a collective sense of belonging based on their cultural affiliations and has been the subject of much discussion in recent years. Some scholars have come to the conclusion that diaspora as a form of social organisation and collective identity is strengthening as an opposition to an alleged homogenisation of the world (Cohen 1997). Other discussants, theorising the new realities, underline the hybridity of these communities and focus on dynamic features of the process. In their view, the majority of the modern diasporas constitute composite formations, created by the results of diverse historical experiences, of multiple journeys to different parts of the globe, each with its own circumstances and particularities. In order to clarify the concept of diaspora as a transnational cultural formation, the task of preparing a systematisation of the phenomenon has emerged.

1.4.a Research agendas

The area of diaspora studies was dominated by the historic perspective, the two key elements discussed being the “Exodus” of an ethnic group and its return (or a possibility of such return). This binary model cannot be applied to modern migration, enriched by a transnational perspective and connected with multiple re-settlements, allowing in many cases unrestricted possibilities of communication with the homeland. Instead of an Exodus from one place to another of a permanent nature, diasporas today encapsulate the multidirectional dispersion of migrants as well as their abilities to gather (rather than return) in the virtual space afforded by information technology.

Traditionally anthropology, history, and geography made the key contributions to the studies of diasporas. The formation of diasporas was investigated as a diversity of historic events, concentrating on the multiplicity of particularities and local practices. For centuries this notion included connotations of forced displacement, a hostile environment, isolation and collective trauma. Migrants were either refugees, fleeing from wars, hunger, ethnic revolts or social terror, or they were victims of slavery, forcefully taken away from the native territories. At the same time some diasporas had been formed by travellers, tradesmen or other voluntary settlers during ancient and imperial colonisations. The notion of diaspora was criticised for 'being used to describe the process of settlement and adaptation, relating to a large range of transnational migration movements' (Anthias 1998:558). She wrote that the term 'diaspora' represented a 'kind of mantra', rather than a concept (*ibid*:557).

Serious discussion on the subject has emerged since the early 1990s with researchers making attempts 'to distinguish diasporas as a theoretical concept from the historical experiences of diaspora' (Brah, 1996:179). The term was seen as a kind of amoeba notion, criticised for being over-used and under-researched (Vertovec, 2001:577). Contradictions in the political trajectories and the poverty of the philosophical framework for representing cultural difference and cultural translation (Hall 1996, Bhabha 1995, Massey 1997) as well as assimilation or integration (Blubacker 2000) have been debated.

To address the contemporary problems of diasporas a new cross-disciplinary approach was required. Recent studies of diaspora are included in the domain of sociology, demography, politics, psychology, philosophy and cultural studies. A discussion about transcontinental cultural formations has been launched (Featherstone 1990, Robertson, 1995). The analytical framework for such investigations is still under construction. A new hybrid language is being constructed to define the concept, borrowing and adapting terms from different sources, disciplines, and scientific models³². In order to conduct empirical research to

³² For example, there is an ongoing debate on the meaning, definition, nature and basic features of transnational communities (the term that is more often used in US publications) or diasporas (widely accepted in Britain).

investigate in depth and theorise aspects of migrant networking, various interdisciplinary international programmes have been launched. An example is the co-ordinated research in different countries, using material relating to different ethnic and social groups, conducted by the research program Transnational Communities based in Oxford (www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk).

Diasporas as complex social constructions and a combination of cultural narratives have been subjected to various classifications (Appadurai 1997, Cohen 1997, Sheffer 2003, Vertovec 1996, 2001). Depending on whether the research focus is on transnational or ethnic features of migrant communities, several understandings of diaspora follow on. The first is the most closely connected with the established earlier historical perspective and holds that diasporas are purely ethnic phenomena. A second equates diasporas with various transnational networks of migrants, whilst a third approach discusses diasporas in connection with cultural identities and investigates solidarities of migrants. The strengths and weaknesses of the above research perspectives will be analysed here, and a methodological frame for this dissertation will be suggested after that.

1.4.b. Diaspora as an embodiment of essentialist features.

This research perspective defines diasporas as solely ethnic phenomena and distinguishes between them and non-ethnic transnational formations. For example, Sheffer underlines that diasporas are formed by “blood ties, similar physical characteristics, language, historical memories, shared interests and cultural tenets, including religious beliefs and rituals, and all of those were based on strong attachments to a territory conceived of as the original homeland” (Sheffer 2003:51). Moreover, he argues that “such sentiments and attributions have always been necessary for turning a group of migrants into a more cohesive diaspora whose members follow similar patterns of organisation and behaviour” (*ibid*). Sheffer singled out the following unities as non-diasporas: global religions, political-ideological dispersals, transnational linguistic communities and even global youth culture. Narrowing the notion of diaspora to strictly ethnic essentialist predicates

(blood ties and physical characteristics), Sheffer separates them from the other types of transnational formations that do not, in his opinion, represent diasporas.

Although the focusing on purely ethnic features of emigrant communities helps to specify the role of ethno-national features in the diaspora, this approach does not allow for the multiplicity of migrants' solidarities. It separates the ethnic features of migrants from the diverse system of cultural and social affiliations these people possess. Within the essentialist research perspective, the Russian migrant communities of the 19th and 20th centuries would be labelled a political-ideological dispersion, while the migrant communities of former USSR citizens in Europe would be nothing more than transnational linguistic communities. The focus on essentialist features of migrants excludes the interplay of various solidarities in the diasporas as well as the multiplicity of reasons and situations behind these displacements. Emerging solidarities within a new culture and the impact of long-established communities on culture and life in the host country are also ignored.

1.4.c. Diaspora as transnational networking

Transnationalism relates to a wide range of networks of international migrants, connecting them with people of the same origin in other countries. Transnationalism, as US based researchers in the areas of anthropology, sociology and history read³³ it, is a combination of social and cultural, personal and institutional links: civic memberships, economic involvements, professional interests and cultural identities. Vertovec (2001:580) suggests defining transnationalism as practices of crossing borders, especially by circular and repeated migrations. This implies that not every migration necessarily produces transnationalism, but transnationalism, according to Vertovec, is always a result of displacement, and is grounded upon the migrants'

³³ The features of transnationalism are debated within geographically varied academic traditions and represent an intersection of several fields of research (migration and postcolonial studies, global cultural flows) within different academic disciplines. All this contributes to the difficulties in researching and theorising these questions. For example, in her work on American migrants, Morawska describes two related but different interpretations of transnationalism. Political scientists in Europe understand transnationalism as a shift beyond the accustomed territorial memberships and state bound identities (as in the case of the European Union membership, for example). According to these understandings transnationalism is thought to reduce the power of the state to control and regulate activities within its borders. As Beck (Beck 2000:11) puts it, "sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks".

perception that they share a form of common identity associated with a place of origin and is based on cultural, or linguistic, or social, or historical closeness, or a combination of them.

Transnationalism can be considered to be a deliberate and empowering choice from below, contrasting with official networks imposed from above. For example, Brigit Anderson studied The United Workers' Association, a migrant domestic workers' group based in London, which is unusual among community groups in the UK in that it is organised around employment and immigration status rather than nationality. She showed that those domestic workers in London who are mainly of African and Asian origin most readily link with migrants from the same country when facilitating contacts with the family, sending remittances home, sharing particular food and speaking particular languages, sometimes acting collectively to support those confronted with catastrophes or national disasters. Anderson interprets these as pan-regional belongings facilitating the growth of professional solidarities and the emergence of 'this self-conscious transnational community based on a shared but non-essentialist sense of identity' (Anderson 2001:682).

Transnational characteristics can be expressed to various degrees in different communities and tend to show up in various spheres of cultural, social and political activities. Taking into account the multiplicity of potential transnational solidarities, the resulted transnational networking is also multifaceted. For example, in some cases transnationalism emerges as a result of virtual contacts and thus may occur without the migration of everyone connected by these networks. For example, a case of young Ukrainian Jews who develop 'transnational orientations' without migrating anywhere under the influence of an interpersonal exchange of life-stories and information with migrants and returnees was studied by Golbert (2001). She noted that young Ukrainian Jews undertook the evaluation of 'everyday experiences, the past, and the future, with a double consciousness' and developed 'a transnational conception of self' from an acquired or mediated transnational perspective (Golbert: 715). Virtual connections and mediated histories of others' experiences allow individuals or even groups of people to become a part of transnational networking.

The concept of transnationalism, as compared to diaspora, is often considered a new perspective, created by the process of globalization and the so-called post-nation state of the world. Some researchers doubt the newness of the phenomenon, arguing that migrants in the past also kept in contact with their home countries (through return migration, letters, remittances, the ethnic press etc) while at the same time creating their networks in the host countries. Another view holds that, although such connections may not represent a new social tendency, their scale, intensity and impact has increased to such an extent that it could be spoken of as a new phenomenon. As described by Caglar (2001:607), transnationalism represents 'a new analytic optic which makes visible the increasing intensity and scope of circular flows of persons, goods, information and symbols triggered by international labour migration'. While noting the similarities with long-standing forms of migrant connection to homelands, the current transnational approach elaborates on the reasons for today's numerous linkages being different and more intense than earlier forms (Foner 1997).

At the same time this popular approach has its own pitfalls. The main methodological weakness of transnationalism is that it overshadows specific features of the communities emerging as a result of constant everyday relation with the host culture. It downplays the intense process of borrowing and learning that migrants are subjected to in their new place of residence and the cultural influences (sometimes mutual) of the indigenous culture and the native culture of the strangers, thus downplaying the processes of migrants' adaptation and integration.

1.5. DIASPORA AND SOLIDARITIES: REAL AND SYMBOLIC BONDS

1.5. a. Diaspora as cultural bonding

The methodological frame of this research follows Hall and R. Cohen in establishing migrants' identity discourses as instructive for creating a diaspora. This dissertation defines diasporas as a combination of solidarities between people of the same origin

who choose to keep contacts with each other, recognising the closeness of their life experiences including sharing similar cultural affiliations and speaking the same language. This reading implies, firstly, an infrastructure of permanent communications within the migrant communities which embodies an interest in renegotiating their collective identity. A second type of solidarity implies migrants' attachments to, interest in and contacts with their place origin. Such contacts might be real and tangible, and take place through material exchanges and direct contacts. It is argued here that when such contacts are impossible, members of the diaspora deterritorialize their culture in order to keep an illusion of tangible connections with the former home: the reconstruction of the place of origin in the diasporic imagination symbolically links migrants with the culture and history of the place of origin. The third implication is a sense of a new belonging, produced by the new locality, loyalties to the host country and collective efforts to understand the new culture and society.

Thus the first criteria of the diaspora being considered here is an interest of migrants in other migrants of the same origin, an empathy with them, leading to collective efforts to establish contact with each other, resulting in the emergence of a sense of belonging and an understanding of the individual as part of the diaspora. Diverse conditions define the forms of self-organisation of migrants: confessional rituals, communal taxes, communal help and advice, schools, newspapers etc. or any combination of them. An infrastructure of a diaspora embodies such interests and provides evidence that it is expressed at a conscious level. Considering the Russian diaspora in Britain during 1991-2005, it is important to appreciate that, as will be shown in this dissertation, communications via new communication channels among Russian migrants to the UK encouraged diasporic solidarities among the newcomers and channelled its activities outside organisations or established centres of Russian emigration. A number of social and cultural structures emerge in the diaspora. If the consciousness of being connected with other migrants of the same origin in the new place of living is established, it signifies the existence of diaspora itself, and one of the purposes of research is to provide evidences of migrants' attachments to their co-travellers and to document the emergence of diasporic identity discourses.

Such solidarities are formed during the process of migration and settlement rather than in advance. Following on from Gold (1997), Van Hear (1998) and Magnifico (1988), Sheffer generalises that “very few migrants are emotionally or cognitively in a position to make a firm decision whether or not they intend to live away from their homelands permanently, and whether or not they wish to maintain their connections” (Sheffer 2003:77). For example, the majority of the citizens of the Russian Empire staying abroad immediately after the revolution did not make any effort to integrate. They self-identified themselves as refugees and considered their displacement temporary. However, when the emigration continued during 1920-1930, the understanding that they were being displaced permanently was expressed in their new self-description as “emigrants”, their further reflections on their mission in Europe and their growing diasporic consciousness which was conceptualised as “Zarubeznaia Rossia” (Russia Abroad). Suomela argues that migrants’ newspapers had already distinguished between the two notions of refugee and emigrant by the 1920s (Suomela 2004:34). Ivan Bunin stressed the conscious decision to emigrate, the collective reading of native culture and life perspectives and spoke of the collective solidarity based on political and ideological choices: “We, the majority of us, are not refugees, but emigrants, people who voluntarily have left their motherland. Our mission is connected to our reasons for leaving it.” (Bunin 1994:202). Marienstras (1989) points out the ontological difficulties in defining the point in time when groups of tourists, migrants, guest workers, refugees and asylum seekers become members of diasporas. The shared understanding of collective destiny, the perception of displacement as a life long pilgrimage and the collective frame of reference in discussing new experiences signified this moment in the creation of the post-Revolution Russian diaspora.

Secondly, it is suggested in this study that, for a wave of migrants to become a diaspora, there should be evidence of their being connected to their homeland in both the real and metaphorical sense.

The term diaspora encapsulates a tangible, real connection with the “mainland” through culture and personalities, involving exchanges of gifts and visits between the two localities. In some diasporas, connections between migrants and the country of origin are mostly expressed at the level of personal relationships in the form of support for relatives and through remittances sent home. In other cases connections with the home country are institutionalised at the level of charities, foundations and occupational unions. Mass media of the country of origin, available in the host country (Robins 2000), and cultural contacts of various types (exchanges, exhibitions, movies, concerts etc) help construct these bonds. The understanding of where exactly is a migrant’s place of origin is not straightforward since its scale varies depending on the situation of communication: migrants demonstrate their belonging to a native city/village, region, and country. Baldassar (1997) studied Italian migrant communities in Australia and introduced the notion of “compalinissimo”– the population of an area where the sound of the local church bells can be heard. In her ethnographic research she described these contacts between migrants from the same town, province, and country and observed that these people demonstrate from time to time their attachments to each of them. Some researchers, considering the global mobility of population and the temporal character of international migrations, speculate that the notion of diaspora should include those family members who stay at home but maintain close contact with migrants (Miller and Slater, 2000), although traditionally the notion has incorporated only those who have left the home territories. Indeed, as previously described, constant contact with the native land through modern technology changes the individual’s perception of being isolated from the family while in the other parts of the globe. Such relationships are discussed in more detail in a number of works on transnationalism (for example Basch *et al.* 1994, Bailey 2002).

But homeland in the migrants’ perception is not only limited to their real contacts or preservation of traditional way of life. Cohen (1997) stresses the importance of solidarity with an imagined homeland and ideas of a symbolic return. Migrants’ imaginations construct the image of the homeland with their personal real-life observations as well as mediated information about the native territory and culture:

collective memories, conversations, family stories, as well as narratives of native history.

When commuting to or keeping in contact with the country of origin is impossible, a phenomenon of “portability of national identity” appears (Sassen 1991, 2002)³⁴. For example, in the case of Russian refugees after the 1917 revolution and the so-called permanent migrants to the US in 1970s, both groups experienced the physiological trauma of being completely isolated from their native country with very limited possibilities to contact home. And in both cases the preserved and non-hybridised character of the migrants’ life-style substituted for the tangible component of diasporic contacts with the native land.

Such attachments to native culture are described as 'symbolic bonds', connecting migrants with a country, period and culture that may have gone and no longer exists. Migrants refer to a metaphoric homeland, which represents their memories, family history or cultural narratives of origin. In this sense, homeland is ‘a place of no return’, for even were it is possible to visit the native geographical territory, the metaphoric homeland may not exist in real geography or history, being the product of a collective interpretation of an imagined community. Indeed, the concept of return is a return to this place of their imagination. It is argued in this research that diaspora should not be interpreted only in terms of place of origin or membership of a real or immediate émigré community or in terms of migrants’ tangible connections in the form of gifts and remittances to their relatives back home. It is argued that diasporic consciousness can also be expressed as solidarity with a wider imagined community, based on shared myths, sets of values and cultural aspirations, including tales of heroes or martyrs combined with a shared pride in their achievements. Every diaspora implies a unique set of narratives created by real-life experiences and national or ethnic cultural heritage and is at the same time influenced by the local conditions. It preserves, accumulates and transmits narratives contributed by its members, but at the same time diaspora itself represents a powerful engine which imposes a dominant set of cultural traits on the members of migrants’ communities.

³⁴ See also 2.2.d, 2.2.e, 2.2.f., 2.2.g.

Thirdly, it is argued here that the new loyalties emerging with regards to the host country shall be included when defining diasporic solidarities. The collective process of learning of and about the new culture and way of life invests itself into the new solidarities within a diaspora. Hall highlights (Hall 1990:225) that the process of communication within the diaspora is not only about “rediscovery” but about “a production” of new solidarities; therefore self-representations expressed in a diaspora are not identical to the “mainland” national self-representation. Hall points out that any process of identity formation encapsulates specific features of place and time: “We all write and speak from a particular place and time... What we say is always “in context” positioned” (Hall 1998:315). Any migrants discussing their own origins do so in context of a definite host country. The emerging diasporic narratives reflect specific features of the host culture, patterned with the context in which migrants live and negotiate their “life-worlds”. New points of references created in this process help to structure their new identities not simply as migrants, but as migrants “somewhere”, thus reinforcing symbolic bonds with each other. The process of reconstructing national identities in diasporas, although universal, bears considerable variations in different communities.

1.5.b Communities imagined and re-imagined

The mechanism of creating a sense of unity and belonging was researched by Benedict Anderson in his influential book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Anderson 1983). The author demonstrated that any national culture has been constructed from local customs and traditions, rather than represent certain primordial ethnic features: the sets of national icons and myths have been continuously structured and restructured to reflect implemented identity politics. Anderson showed how, in order for a national culture to be created, local relationships and cultural rituals were incorporated through an imposed set of values and obligations which connected them to strangers, living on the same territory, with whom there was no direct contact. Physical bonds within communities, based on day-to-day communication and face-to-face relationships, were replaced or overtaken by social memberships based on a broader and more abstract (imagined) sense of

belonging. The construction of national Self was inextricably linked to categorising the Other and defining borders in terms of real and social geography. Following from Anderson, Papastergiadis comments that ‘the question of self-representation whether in terms of narratives or of icons was increasingly restructured to fit the contours of national identity. Local traditions became expressive of national forms of being. In most cases competing traditions had to be suppressed while others had to be smuggled in from elsewhere and invented overnight in order to confer a sense of timeless and continuous belonging. The individual recollection of things past was actually mediated through a politicised communion with the memory of the collective... National cultures were thus imagined as occupying exclusive and discrete territories. Boundaries were fixed around the space of these imagined communities.’ (Papastergiadis 2000: 201-202)³⁵.

The notion of imagined communities was created to describe how the sense of belonging to a small, tangible network of neighbours, co-workers and relatives had been undermined under the influence of a dissemination of texts (of national newspapers in particular) which conferred a new sense of solidarity amongst different peoples. Originally Anderson meant one-to-many communications (newspapers) capable of creating a sense of homogeneous space of ‘us’ bordering the spaces of ‘others’, as well as an illusion of the simultaneousness of events. This is even more applicable to the post-national world, where by means of modern communication migrants are able to create a sense of a belonging to various communities, geographically dispersed, but holding and recreating a common shared identity, a diasporic culture providing collective frames of reference and cultural codes. In the case of a diaspora and especially a diasporic virtual community, the sense of belonging to an imagined “home” is indeed an abstract one.

Although Anderson focused on the process of emerging nationalism, the notion of imagined communities is generally interpreted in literature in a wider, more universal sense to describe individuals starting to imagine themselves as part of a community through mediated relationships. Diaspora as an imagined community represents a

³⁵ See also this dissertation 2.2.c.

social domain where migrants' narratives are accumulated, collectively selected and reproduced in the form of diasporic identities.

1.5.c Russian diaspora: visualising underlining features

In this famous book "*Global diasporas: an Introduction*" Cohen singles out five forms of diasporic communities: victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural. According to Cohen, a dominance of ethnic violence or social trauma as the reason for migration signifies the victim type of diaspora, of which examples are Armenians and Afro-Americans. The labour type is associated with ethnic migrations emerging as a result of economic imperatives (Turks in Germany, Filipinos in the Mediterranean). Cohen uses the example of the Lebanese diaspora to illustrate the trade type, where migrants create ethnic sub-economies and international migration is motivated by these enterprises. The imperial type is characterised by a deliberate method of penetration into the territory combined with a sense of belonging to a world power (British expatriates). The cultural type (Caribbean) is based on the special importance to migrants of their ethnic or regional culture (in terms of beliefs, traditions, cuisine, art etc.).

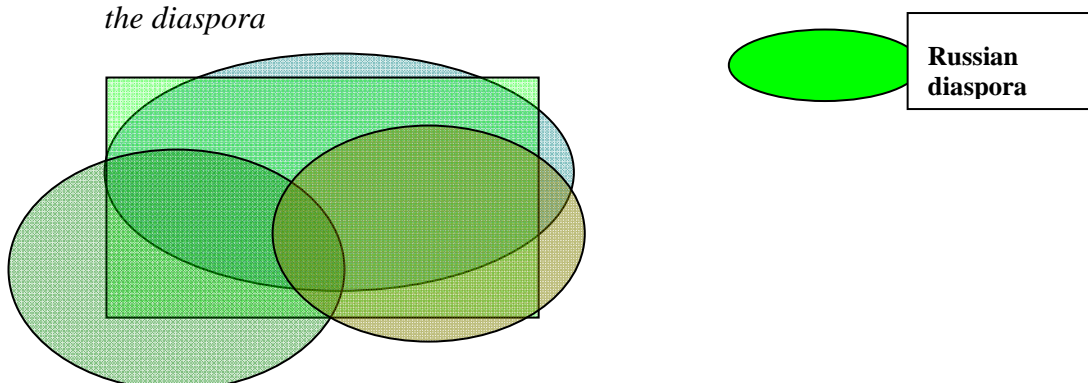
This typology has been criticised as 'descriptive and inductivist' (Anthias, 1998:560), because Cohen uses various criteria for systematising diasporas and ignores intersections and different modalities of the phenomena. But recent research often relies on this typology. For example, Emmer (1986) used the diaspora concept as defined by Cohen to differentiate between three groups of transatlantic migrants: slaves from Africa, free European settlers and labourers from South Asia (India and the Dutch East Indies). Through this comparison he showed that the relationship between migration, diaspora and transnational connections differed from one group to another, depending on their ability to keep in contact with the homeland and on their interest in building transnationalist ties and constructing diasporic consciousness. Nancy Green also applied these concepts to a number of historical examples, drawing mainly on European and European-Atlantic experiences. She developed a comparative model and showed that in diverse destinations migrants of the same origin formed different kinds of relations between themselves and the

homeland (Green 1997). Cohen`s classification was also used in some Russian-language research, referring Russian migration to several types of this typology at the same time (Lebedeva 2001).

Drawing on Cohen`s classification, it is proposed here to define the Russian diaspora through the following diagram. A diaspora is illustrated by Euler`s circles as an intersection of various types of migration in order to demonstrate the dynamic balance between various motivations and solidarities. The cultural type (in this case common language) is placed as the convergence point (base circle) with the other four types represented as circles intersecting it and each other. Whereas asylum seekers, fleeing from ethnic or social violence (representing Cohen`s “victim” type of migrants) and the imperial type of migrant (elites within international migration that settle and move according to their desires and are able to keep up a chosen lifestyle in the host country) appear to have nothing in common, in their intersection can be found several real, contradictory figures of prominent politicians or entrepreneurs (for example, in the case of the Russian diaspora, some Russian oligarchs). Migration of the labour type is a diverse phenomena itself, which includes middle class highly qualified professionals (for example biologists, mathematicians, doctors) as well as manual workers. Both groups may intersect with the other classifications. The trade type of international migration is represented by entrepreneurs whose number and influence vary greatly even within Russian diasporas in different locations. If the scheme is correlated with additional modalities (gender, age, occupation of migrants, location), the illustration permits investigation into the additional intersections. Diagrams A and B, showing the construction and partitions of the Russian diaspora, illustrate how it is possible that not all migrants of the same origin are associated with the diaspora.

Diagram B.

Correlation between Russian-ethnic, Russian-speaking and Russia-born migration in the diaspora



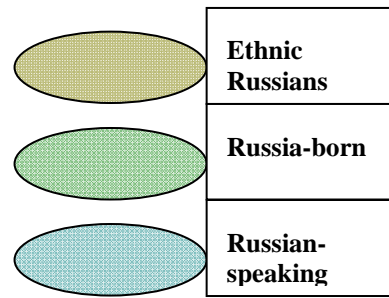
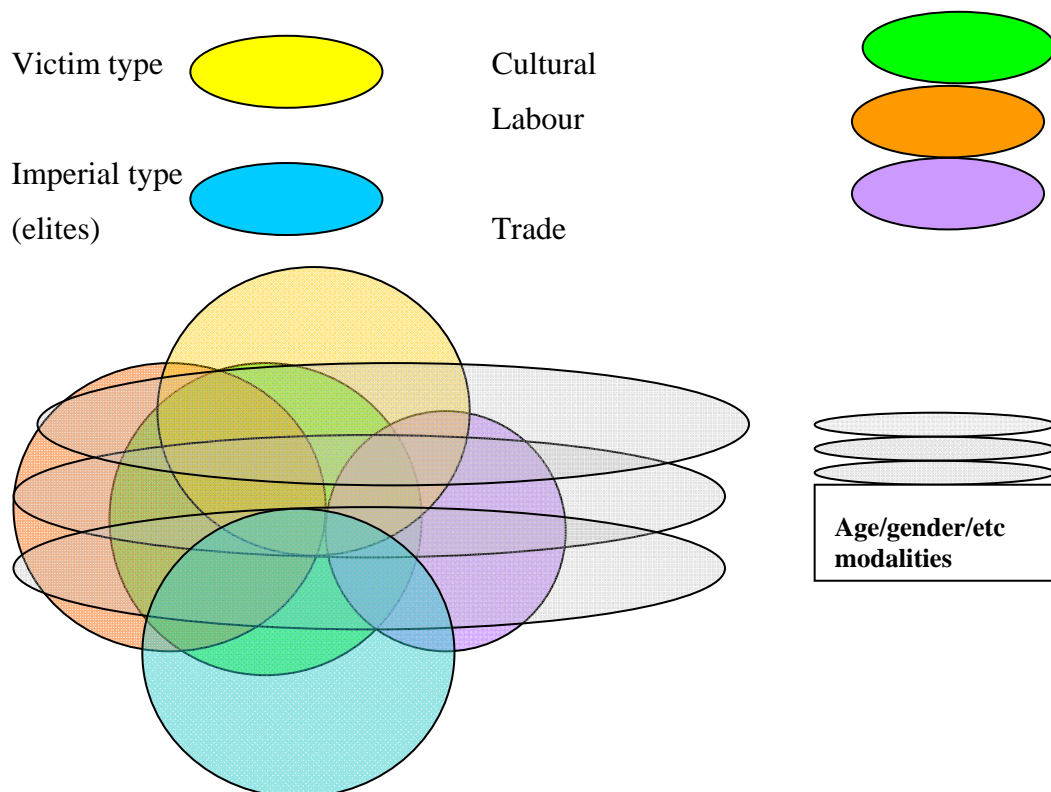


Diagram A

Cohen`s typology adapted to demonstrate various motivations and social modalities within the Russian diaspora



This diagram illustrates the construction of a diaspora and demonstrates that a diaspora represents a rhizomic combination of relationships and solidarities rather than a hierarchic social structure. In order to draw a more detailed diagram of a

modern Russian diaspora, the scheme should be placed in the background, created by signals and influences from a variety of external sources.

1.5.d. Types of migration: comparing different waves of Russian-speaking migration

An attempt will now be made to apply this classification in order to describe several waves of Russian migration (described in 1.2.c) and to make a comparison between them³⁶.

Emigration from Russia after the Revolution was involuntary and unplanned. Military and political strives motivated the displacements, and the Russian diaspora of this time shall be defined as a victim type. Migrants lost their citizenship rights as well as the country they were loyal to. Therefore national identity and the solidarities associated with it transcended social divisions among them. It is widely accepted in literature (see Brah 1996, Brubaker 1998) that nostalgic narratives are constitutive for migrant communities in victim type diasporas. But nostalgia can be expressed in different forms and through different means. Johnson believes that emigrants of the first wave had a shared vision of the world and their own place in it: “It is seen through the eyes of a class, or rather a dying civilisation. Russian emigration represented and embodied genuine Russian values. [It had] clearly recognisable identity and purpose...” (1988:21).

The main characteristic of post-revolutionary Russian emigration was highlighting, promoting and articulating cultural identity by means of literature and education. Raeff emphasises the role of education, publishing and religious rituals for Russians in exile and the instructive role of the native language: “Language was the fundamental element [...] that not only defined the tradition of modern Russian culture, but also provided the essential ingredient of consciousness and identity of

³⁶ While questions of the Russian national identity and discursive construction of migrants’ identities will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Russia Abroad” (Raeff 1990:109). Language guaranteed the continuity of their identity and made the diaspora operational in terms of activities: “It was the Russian language that tied émigrés to their past and that helped them to transcend their dispersion” (*ibid*:107).

Russian literature (“classical”³⁷ as well as emerging in exile) also had an identarian aspect for migrants: “Quite naturally literature was their means of expressing their belonging and performing a cultural mission for both Russias [Soviet Russia and Russia Abroad]. They spread the knowledge of Russian literature and culture in foreign lands, bolstering the sense of cultural identity of Russia Abroad” (*ibid*). Thus this wave of Russian emigration had an expressed cultural character, while more “pragmatic” solidarities (labour and trade type) were shadowed or even non-existent. As a result, this wave of migrants produced a joint type of cultural and victim diaspora, which had its own cultural legacy, gave rise to migrant communities, and developed various cultural and social policies of cultural identity preservation and non-assimilation.

The third wave of migrants³⁸ from the Soviet Union was at least partly³⁹ involuntary but not enforced (with some individual exceptions). The channels of migration varied from political deportation to emigration with the assistance of ethnic funds from church organisations as well as relatives. Therefore ethnic divisions played a more significant role for these migrants than for those in the first wave. Migrants were characterised by different levels of loyalty to their native country, and issues of their citizenships, both former and current, were less vital than for post-revolutionary émigrés. Not only political, but economic and pragmatic reasons (such as lower standards of life in the USSR, education and life prospects for children) were given

³⁷ Interestingly, Raeff notes the existence of commonly shared among migrants understanding of what represented culture(which was associated with classical heritage and high art only) for the Russian-speaking migrants: “Since the late XIX century there was a consensus in Russia about what constituted classical national literature” (1990:95). This observation supports findings of the subchapter 4.2. of this thesis.

³⁸ As it was noted in 1.2.c, the second wave of migration was complicated by participation in military actions. It was not Russian in terms of ethnic belonging of migrants. Due to these specific features it will not be discussed here.

³⁹ Although it is sometimes referred as voluntary (for ex., Zaionchkovskaia Zh and Vishnevskii A. 1992, quoted in this thesis 1.2.c.)

as motives for emigration, and policies of adaptation/integration were developed by migrants during their settlement in their host countries. Self and other ascribed identities (see below) as well as similar economic status⁴⁰ predisposed migrants to compact settlement in their countries of residence. The above describes this wave as a combination of labour and victim type, while imperial and trade type of migration was not present at all.

It is instructive to address questions of the cultural identity of third wave migrants. Despite the aforementioned political and ethnic divisions migrants self-identified and were seen by the host society as Russian-Soviet people. This identification was based on their socialisation in the Soviet Union, their upbringing within the Russian culture, and their native (and often sole spoken) language. Russian language and Russian culture continued to play an important role for migrants after displacement. Strategies of integration in their host countries were combined with intense personal and mediated communications within their migrant communities.

Without going into much detail, it is possible to highlight several features that characterise the perception of culture by these migrants. If the first Russian emigration pitied the country and home they had lost, the third wave of migrants felt that their native country was losing something that they were always proud of: its culture and intelligentsia. For example, Roman Goul wrote: “Russian culture in the Soviet Union is totally eradicated” (Glad 1993:52) and that after the “disappearance of intelligentsia” there could not be any “future for Russian language and culture in general” (ibid: 55).

Feeling intimately connected with Russian culture, emigrants of the third wave eagerly welcomed Western cultural influences, which they had been deprived of during their life in the USSR: “We like to absorb whatever elements or currents of Western culture” (Kozanova quoted in Glad 1993:149). Aksyonov in the same vein specifies that constant cross-fertilisation of both cultures is essential for contemporary artistic development: “No one can create a culture isolated from

⁴⁰ People were not allowed to sell their property in Russia and take abroad all their financial means in the emigration.

Western culture” (Glad 1993:77) and celebrated the role of his generation of émigré writers in re-establishing links between Russian and Western culture, broken by the Soviet self-isolation (*ibid*).

Finally, for this wave of migrants their separation from their native land was more unbearable than living in emigration, and they experienced this lack of communication (in both tangible and symbolic forms) with their land of origin as painful and forceful. Active publishing activities (for example, in *Syntax* and created earlier *Posev* and *Russkaia Mysl'*) and artistic achievements mark this wave of migrants.

The above allows us to classify this wave of migration as a combination of cultural, labour and victim types.

The post-Soviet wave of migration is the first voluntary migration in the history of Russia in the twentieth-twenty first centuries, and is structured and motivated like other globalised migration flows⁴¹: trade, victim, imperial, labour types are present here. This wave is not sufficiently researched yet, but the first works describing the direction of migration, strategies of adaptation, participants and their identity negotiations are emerging (for example, Markov and Black 2006). These analyses show that post-Soviet Russian-speaking migration is the most diversified in terms of directions of migration, reasons for resettlement, ethnic composition and even the citizenship, occupations and financial status of participants⁴².

The question shall be asked whether one can speak of any continuity of cultural identity of post-Soviet migrants, of their solidarities with each other at their new place of residence. Some researchers give a negative answer. For example, Helen Kopnina, an anthropologist and herself a second generation Russian emigrant, studies Russian communities in Britain and Holland, in particular in London and

⁴¹ 1.3.a and 1.3.b.

⁴² 1.2.d.

Amsterdam⁴³. She argues that Russians in London live “without external recognition and internal awareness” of their commonality (Kopnina 2007:117). She accepts that Russian migrants in big cities can be seen as an “invisible community” or “odd” (*ibid*) diaspora only “by the virtue of their membership of centralising institutions or participation in urban events” (2007:98), but insists that such a “community is neither unitary nor stable and its definition depends on the institution or event that claims to assemble such a community” (*ibid*). Kopnina interprets community (and diaspora in general) as groups, institutions and individuals that are drawn and act together, possess expressed common identity and life interests, and she does not find such unity and organisations among contemporary Russian migrants. She categorises this wave of migrants as a combination of sub communities, singled out on the basis of their strategies of adaptation and communication with the environment (artists, professionals, entrepreneurs etc.). Finally, Kopnina has to accept that Russian migrants in an urban environment serve as an example of theoretical difficulties in drawing “clear boundaries to clear-cut communities” (*ibid*: 116).

The findings of Kopnina’s research would not appear contradictory if the material collected by the researcher was approached using the research framework accepted in this thesis, namely by understanding diasporas as dynamic combinations of solidarities (rather than as a number of organisations, groups and institutions). My argument is that the material collected and published by Kopnina shows that even if the “sense of sameness” is not always reflected upon by the respondents, migrants in reality form a diaspora: they nurture their connections (symbolic or tangible) with their native land; they articulate the same discursive constructions during interviews (examples are reproduced in her book): migrants choose to talk about the same things, formulating and interpreting them in similar ways⁴⁴.

⁴³ At the time of writing this research represents the most extensive published account of these migrant communities.

⁴⁴ For example, “Russians do use *culture* as a reified category, even though they disagree about what Russian culture actually means” (Kopnina 2005:185). They tend to perceive culture as “high culture of art and music” (compare with the first wave of migrants – “classical culture”), allude to deficiency of local culture or the lack of high culture in comparison to Russian culture and at the same time speak about similarities between Russian and Western culture.

Migrants construct their common identity, referring simultaneously to the Russian culture and its belonging to the European tradition. Kopnina finds that the contemporary search for a European identity is important for the self-identification of her respondents: “The boundaries involved in creation of the Russian migration are created in response to larger political social and cultural continuity and are sensitive to the larger entity called Europe, and indeed, the West. The challenge of post-Soviet migrants groups in the Western Europe is related to the process of European Identity formation as a whole” (2007:115).

It is possible to point to a certain continuity of traditions of Russian-speaking migration. Native culture has continued to play an important role in migrants’ identity discourse through the whole twentieth century: “Russians see themselves as representatives of the Russian culture, but are well aware that they are separated from it” (Kopnina 2005:162). Kopnina notes that culture and cultural differences are commonly perceived by Russian-speaking migrants as important and are spoken of “as solid, unchangeable entities” (*ibid*: 200), defining their identity.

The above allows the visualisation of contemporary Russian-speaking diaspora in Britain as demonstrated in diagram A, with cultural type representing the main identification within it.

To summarise, the chapter traced the history of migration from Russia and attempted to contextualise them in connection with studies of global displacements and diaspora. It connected issues of Russian migration with research on international migration flows and resettlements and 1) showed that the contemporary wave of Russian-speaking migration correlates with the dynamics of international migration, 2) reflected on the cultural legacy of the Russian-speaking emigration and traced its continuity in the contemporary “globalised migrations”; and 3) critically analysed scholarship on contemporary diasporic communities.

It was shown that globalised migration is a growing and evolving phenomenon, resulting in modern diasporas no longer representing isolated and homogeneous

communities. Migrants' communities are included in dynamic relationships within the cultural context of the host society, modified under the influence of the global flow of images and narratives from a variety of sources.

This chapter attempted to build upon existing theorisation of diasporas and to customise Cohen's typology of diasporas. Diaspora is categorised in this thesis as a combination of solidarities and attachments, rather than a group of migrants of the same origin or organisations created by them. The study identified the major diasporic solidarities (1.5.), namely to migrants of the same origin, to the host country and to the country of origin (specifying that the latter can be expressed by real connections including exchange of gifts, visits, browsing media, as well as by metaphorical connections through migrants' memories, artistic impressions etc).

Finally, the aforementioned typology was applied to classify different waves of Russian migration and types of communities created by them. The questions of continuity of migrants' identity were addressed. It was shown that cultural belonging has represented the key identification of Russian-speaking migrants through several waves of migration.

CHAPTER 2

2.1. CONCEPTUALISING IDENTITY

The dynamic process of the construction and reconstruction of identities within the Russian diaspora is central to this research. In order to access the subject, this chapter will firstly describe several theoretical approaches in identity studies, discussing the various understandings of national identity in connection with primordial or received features of the phenomena. This is followed by an analysis of the literature on questions of modifications to migrants' identity discourses, on the dilemmas of their conscious as opposed to predetermined changes, and on the process of assimilation/separation of migrants in the host culture. In the second part of the chapter, Russian national identity will be discussed from a historical perspective with an emphasis on the cultural identity of Russian migrants and the perception of emigration in Russian history and mentality. The questions of digital national diasporas and mediated identities in general will be analysed at the end of the chapter. National identities in this subchapter will be discussed in the light of their representations in migrants' on-line communications.

2.1.a Identity: theoretical approaches. Introduction

The phenomenon of identity is simultaneously created in social and political practices, is embedded in both institutional forms and the profound emotional commitment of individuals as represented through their private lives.¹ Although various approaches to theorising questions of identity construction are found across different social disciplines, many of them interconnect in the recognition that identities are generated within specific social worlds, and hence personal and collective identities are closely entangled with each other (Jenkins 1996). Identity theories evoke diverse perspectives as they describe the phenomena from a variety of

¹ This fact may explain the diversity of research approaches and levels of analysis in its study (from micro-sociology and psychoanalysis to ethnomethodology, discourse analysis and social identity theory) and the debates around notions of self, personhood and collectivity.

research frameworks. Two of these theories (as the most relevant to the research), symbolic interactionism and social constructivism, will be discussed now.

2.1.b. Symbolic Interactionism

The theory of symbolic interactionism focuses on the interpretation of meanings and use of symbols in communication, concentrating on how the self is constructed through communication and interaction with others and approaching identities as dynamic, flexible and adjustable social phenomena. It traces its roots to the pragmatist philosopher Mead (1934), and was further developed by Blumer (1969) and Goffman (1959, 1967). Mead believed that, in the process of communication, people interpret actions or objects symbolically. He introduced the term *symbolisation* to represent the process of deriving (“absorbing”) the main (or general, symbolic) meaning from any concrete situation. These symbols (or symbolic gestures) contain allusions to other culturally determined symbols and convey similar reactions during the process of communication. The methodological base of this theory has been formulated by Blumer. He noted that “the term *symbolic interaction* refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their "response" is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning, which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions.” (Blumer,1969:180).

Building on Mead’s ideas, Blumer pointed out that human interaction is instrumental in the formation of meaning regarding any specific object. The meaning attached to an object or an event by an individual grows out of the attitudes and reactions of others. Discussing the theory of symbolic interactionism, Abel underlined the active role of the participant who chooses structures and creates meanings in the process of communication: “People impose meaning on the conditions and thus recreate the conditions in the interaction. The process of the meaning-making of the social actions is central to the theory, while in other theories these meanings are accepted as

existing variables” (Abel, 2000:49). The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasises interactions among people, the use of symbols in communication and interaction, considering interpretation as part of the action. Its concern tends to be with the interactions shaped by daily life and experiences, rather than those associated with large scale and relatively fixed social forces and laws. Researchers working within this tradition focus on how people behave, interact, and modify meanings during typical, ritual or specific situations. Whilst habit, routine and shared meanings also occur through the exchange of symbols, the symbolic interaction perspective emphasises the shifting, flexible, and creative manner in which humans use symbols, which are always open to reappraisal and or adjustment. The theory of symbolic interactionism has been further developed (Garfinkel 1963, Burke 1980, Burke and Reitzes 1981) to integrate a perspective of symbolic interactionism in an analysis of culture-specific identities.

2.1.c. Social Constructivism

While symbolic gestures in personal interactions are seen as constant negotiations of meanings, symbolisation at other levels may be represented as fixed in order to investigate how everyday interconnections are influenced by meta-narratives such as norms, beliefs or order, as well as sets of historically or ethnically defined values. The theory of social constructivism underlines the role of context in communication. The theory is rooted in the works of Durkheim, who showed in his studies on community that people learn what he called rules of social interaction during everyday work and life, and also of Mannheim, who wrote that any intellectual thought is embedded in the cultural and intellectual context of a period. Social constructivism theorists Berger and Luckmann pointed out that theoretical, purposely acquired knowledge is only a minor part of social *selves*, and introduced identity as a process of constant production of identity. They believed that individuals have little control over their identity development because their lives are shaped by advertising and media, by social institutions such as school, economies and employment (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

This understanding was later complicated by the introduction of ideas of relatedness in the context of communication relationships. Expanding on Berger and Luckman, Gergen claimed that any meaning is a result of representations, relationships and interactions and “is not the product of individual minds but of relationships...One is born into relatedness, both defined by it and defining of it” (Gergen, 1991:243). In Baudrillard’s terms, “our private sphere ceased to be a stage where the drama of the subject at odds with the objects and with the image is played out; we no longer exist as playwrights or actors but as terminals of multiple networks” (Baudrillard, 1987:10). Gergen disputed the importance of dilemmas between the subjective and objective points of view, calling for the eradication of “the distinction between world and the mind, object and subject” by removing both “from the field of existing essences...World and mind became entries in the discursive practices of the culture” (Gergen, 1991:103).

Current social-constructivist theory discusses the dissolution of firmly defined structures provided by family and work-place loyalties, traditional political and local community commitments, class, region, and nation state divisions alongside the emergence of ‘self-culture’ or the culture of ‘life of one’s own’ (Beck, 2000) amongst subjects who are mobile, highly flexible and self-conscious. The process of re-socialisation, which used to be a sign that an individual did not conform to the values and norms of the group, becomes a regular practice due to mobility of people and multiple settlements in the process of migration.

Accepting the social constructivist approach, current research focuses on the collective search for meanings, instead of discussing identities as generic essences (the so-called “true selves”). The dynamic interplay of self-attributed and other-ascribed identity affiliations represent a special interest for this study.

2.1.d. Habitus and cultural dispositions

The relationship between society and self in identity negotiations can be explained by applying the notion of habitus and (cultural) dispositions, introduced by Pierre Bourdieu. The scholar highlighted the role of an agency in these interrelationships–

certain powerful “structuring structures” (1977:72), which “can be objectively regulated and regular without in any way being a product of obedience to rules” (*ibid.*). He notes that such everyday interspersing influences “collectively orchestrate” a society “without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor” (*ibid.*). Bourdieu names them *dispositions*, which in their multiplicity create a *habitus*, “the structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (*ibid.*). A habitus according to Bourdieu comprises a number of dispositions: systems of beliefs and ethical norms (“a whole body of wisdom, sayings”, and “the unconscious principles of the ethos” “objective regularities” in forms of “reasonable and unreasonable conduct for every agent”), social geography (“commonplaces”), principles of othering (“that’s not for the like of us”, “determinate type of objective regularities”) (*ibid.*:77).

The notion of habitus suggests a solution for an epistemological dilemma between the analysis of objective structures and subjective knowledge. The habitus is constituted by social and economic conditions of existence (named a field by Bourdieu), but becomes meaningful through reflexive knowledge in the form of cultural dispositions. As Jenkins describes this process: “First there is work done in the act of observation and objectification or distortion of social reality which it is likely to produce. Second, there is an awareness of that distortion” [...](1992:50). He points out that this awareness becomes a social actor in its own right.

The notion of habitus is widely used in studies of identity and national identity in particular (for example, Gundelach 2000, Thompson 2001). Stolcke discusses how appeals to the “national habitus” of migrants can be perceived as damaging to the host national identity (Stolcke 1999). Some authors use the notion of habitus interchangeably with national identity. For example, Karner provides a historically contextualized account of the construction and contestation of Austrian national identities and equates the concepts of habitus and identity, writing that “national identity can be regarded as a sort of habitus” (Karner, 2005: 221–263). This

dissertation follows Bourdieu in diverging from such an approach, interpreting habitus as an agency while identity is perceived as having a narrativized and discursive nature.

2.2. REFLEXIVITY OF IDENTITY. MIGRANTS' IDENTITIES

2.2.a. Power positions and relatedness of identity

National identity is not only open to constant reconstruction through new interpretations, but is subject to adaptation or abbreviation. Bourdieu accepts that “cognitive and motivating structures” (1977:78) of a habitus are produced by a historically, temporally, socially specific set of conditions: “The dispositions are durably inculcated by objective conditions (1977:77)”. But at the same time the scholar rejects mechanistic objectivism and accepts a multiplicity of “generation modes” of the phenomenon, noting that such dispositions cannot be directly deduced from the objective conditions that have triggered them. In the process of interpretation, the culture does not emerge as an absolute, but demonstrates its relatedness, where images, narratives, and practices obtain meaning and importance through the way they are related to each other. The actual meaning emerges as a result of layered preceding accounts. Instead of a reality with existing essences, the boundaries between images and representations on the one hand and reality on the other are blurred. Identity in a way represents yet another performative act of creation rather than an essence.

The process of self-identification is interspersed by a variety of signals. The influence of context on the process of identity formation is central to understanding why the self does not exist as “a thing in itself”, why it is always “saturated” by external influences. In the world of inequalities these multidirectional modifications to identity form a pattern of existing power positions and create a dynamic ‘identity politics’: “There is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental *law of origin*” (Hall 1988:44).

Diverse models have been created to describe the nature and consequences of identity politics. Castells dilemmatically defines the problem of self and society as “increasingly structured around a bipolar opposition between the Net and the Self” (2001:6) and criticizes the global networks of wealth, power, and images as “economically efficient but incapable of giving meaning to people’s life” (*ibid*). Other scholars suggest less problematic explanations of constant modifications to identities: as habitus and disposition (Bourdieu 1977), or “cultural translation” into one’s identity (Lotman 2001), or as “saturation” of self during the interaction with the world (Gergen 1991). Gergen discussed the process of saturation of self in terms of the blurring of edges between the real and imagined, where identity is a result of “industries of identity production” imposing various roles on the players (1991:184). He notes that as a result, stable identities based on social class hierarchies are replaced by multiple, fragmented and more uncertain identities based on ‘life-style’ and consumer choices.

Some scholars reject a purely deterministic understanding of power/identity interconnections as the direct exercise of legitimate power on identities. Bourdieu uses the term “power domination” (Bourdieu 1977:183-197), which he defines as “euphemized” (*ibid*: 196) – and often linguistically moderated – forms of exercising power arguments, which are moved into a “taken for granted” (*ibid*: 183) identity domain. Such symbolic domination represents a “gentle, hidden form” (*ibid*) of power, which influences the habitus through cultural dispositions and informs social and cultural practices in the society.

Mathews follows Bourdieu in creating a powerful analogy of the custom-tailored identity choice with a customer’s behaviour in a supermarket: 'The cultural supermarket bears some resemblance to its metaphorical root, the material supermarket. (Products from different parts of the world sit side by side here.) And just as in the material supermarket shelf space is unequally distributed - products like Coca-Cola being in the middle, easily seen shelves, other, less heavily advertised products being above the customer's head, and less noticeable - so too in the cultural supermarket. Those societies whose material goods are readily available in the world

also have greater cultural influence in the world [...]’ (Mathews, 2000:20). Mathews mentions that although “the shelves of cultural supermarket are arranged in terms of money...a multiplicity of information and potential identities can be found there” (*ibid*). Orr compares power influences to a baton to be passed on during a race of discourses and stresses “situatedness” in the process of interpretation: “The context of influence and the influence of context are therefore the how and why questions any text will variously address” (Orr 2003: 84).

Various studies stress the ability of identities to resist power discourses. They discuss it in terms of “influences for” reversing the hierarchal order of any “influence over” using the examples of the popularity of Jazz (Awkward 1989), of Afro-American women’s writing (Baker 1984) and of awakening interest in ancient cultures (Knox 1994). In Soviet culture, examples of such resistant forms of identity search are the popularity of abstract art as well as orthodox painting under the dominant narratives of socialist realism, and the emergence of “village prose” literature. Orr builds on Bakhtin’s work in specifying that “authority may be multiple dialogic or reciprocal just as a number of strands plaited together make a more diverse but stronger rope” (Orr 2003:83). She suggests that the context of culture embeds a complex process of identity production and should include references to different histories and other geographies as well as subsequent interpretations or readings.

2.2.b. Saturation of self and choice of identity: conscious and determinist approaches

Discussions of identity politics and the active role of cultural context in identities’ “saturation” also evoke questions of personal freedom over identity and have been discussed by various scholars in recent years.

If identity is understood as inherited through language and reappraised by institutional identity politics, the role of personal experiences and choices is minimized. Scholars debate whether identity features can be consciously chosen by a person or can only be represented as inherited or/and socially determined characteristics. Eagleton believes that identity is “a quasi-determinist concept,

meaning those features of social life - custom, kinship, language, ritual, mythology - which choose us far more than we choose them” (Eagleton 2000: 28). “This preference for one cultural identity rather than another is a-rational, in the sense that opting to belong to democracy rather than a dictatorship is not” (ibid: 58).

Mathews, in his research into cultural identities among modern Japanese artists, comes to an opposing view. He argues that the flow of information and images from multiple sources creates possibilities for an alternative choice of cultural identity, and therefore challenges and reduces the realm of historically or culturally ascribed identities, claiming that an individual is able to some extent to choose their own identities: 'the cultural identity that people are naturally given becomes increasingly conscious and wider open with possibilities' (Mathews, 2000:19)². Other studies also show that the selective and interpretative attitude of individuals has been underestimated. For instance, the role of mass media in identity construction has been discussed traditionally in terms of dominances of power and irrational consumption, but recent literature underlines the creative process of decoding, rational and personalised meaning-creation by recipients in line with Bourdieu's ideas of the reflexive character of knowledge. As an example, Willis shows how people manipulate cultural resources (youth music subculture in his case) and demonstrate a creative attitude to images and commodities that they come across in the mass media (Willis 1990). He concludes that their mass media consumption has more a negotiated rather than a passive character. At the same time he argues in connection with the reception of meanings that the character of mass media influence on everyday life is patterned with the educational background, family structure, age, gender, ethnicity and other socio-cultural and psychological factors, again in line with Bourdieu's ideas of cultural capital as a form of power domination.

Identity is a culturally based and socially defined discourse, but people still possess the ability to reflect upon their identity and reconstruct it according to their own choices. They are able “to continue to speak of reason, emotion, memory and the

² Mathews assumes at the same time that the realm of the cultural supermarket (imposed values and demands) may be expanding and increasingly unconscious.

like” (Gergen 1991:241-2) and create so-called ‘self culture’ or the culture of ‘life of one’s own’ (Beck, 2000). Self-conscious subjects have replaced the traditional individual embedded in firmly defined places and sites provided by class, locality, and nation state, and one of the main identity research questions relates to how individual or group interpretation and decoding practices are motivated and encouraged, and what they are reflective of.

2.2.c. National identity: language and communal narration

Within the aforementioned analytical perspectives (social constructivism and the “theory of social reproduction” of Bourdieu), identity is understood to be culturally constructed, and transferable through the language and ongoing processes of communication in the form of codes, practices, values, beliefs and myths³.

Language conveys associations with distinctive historic experiences and national politics and thus influences identity. Berger and Luckmann (1966) highlighted the importance of “primary knowledge” in the form of myths, moral prescriptions, values, beliefs and rules of behaviour; they built on the work of Schutze (Schutze, 1936) when they discussed the special role of language in conveying these meanings. Summarising their ideas Abel commented: “By means of language social constructions articulate identity” (Abel, *ibid*: 112). Schutze in turn was very much influenced by Herder’s theory of interpretation (1760), including the account of the relation between thought and language. Thus national identity is embedded within the language and through it reproduces itself. These relationships have been formulated in Russian culture by Viazemskii: “Language is a confession of a nation” (*Язык есть исповедь народа*) (n.a). Practices of culture take place under distinctive social conditions of time and place and in specific historic and national contexts. As Hall points out, the process of identity formation is “positioned, always in context” (Hall:1990:224).

³ The theory of symbolic interactionism also reflects on the identity/language connection: within this framework a language in the identity formation is perceived as a tool kit for interpretation.

It is believed that a significant part of what is prescribed as national identity is transmitted subconsciously. Bourdieu notes that even when people believe that they have lost some knowledge, it exists at the out of awareness level: “The unconscious is never anything than the forgetting of history which history itself produces [...] (1977:78)”. Building on Bourdieu, Minov in his research demonstrated that a significant share of communicative practices related to established political practices existing as unstated assumptions. He studied how these assumptions, which were once based on privilege and positions of power, continue to shape a certain domain of identities in the USA today, demonstrating that in general public discourse in the USA is very much influenced by unstated assumptions of, for example, ‘America-centrism’, ‘world power’ and ‘the president’s wisdom’ (Minov, 1990). Minov referred to ideas, previously formulated in race studies, of ‘privileging subjectivity’, holding that the subjectivity of the white master was built on a position of privilege in the epoch of slavery, fixed through institutions, patterns of behaviour and expectations, and that these assumptions of privilege form an important part of the narrative of race identity today. Minov’s concept holds that much of the assumption of privilege is at an out-of-awareness level, and thus has continued long after the conditions which caused that superiority, domination or position of power have disappeared. This concept is highly relevant when examining migrant identities, where unstated assumptions reveal themselves under the new conditions.

Identity discourse comprises collective and individual “skilful decoding” (Orr, 2003:37) according to a culturally specific set of rules, and simultaneously a “successful negotiation” of one’s own readings with the existing narratives (*ibid*). As Bourdieu puts it, language “constitute[s] collective thought as much as express[es] it” (1977:167). Society participates in identity construction by legitimising social experiences of previous generations. Middleton and Edwards in “Collective Remembering” showed that memories are considered intelligible only if they correlate with the available language of the culture; they suggested the term *communal memory* to refer to the process of social negotiation that occurs among people in deciding “what happened”⁴. National culture, history and heritage would,

⁴ It is relevant to the whole process of imaging of nations as new unities or communities, described by Anderson (1.5.b)

were they lacking structure, be only mosaics made up of various facts. It is only through interpretations that structure is obtained. It is possible to generalize that national identity is discursively constructed.

Decoding, structuring and imagining is done within communities of interpretation (see for example, Fish 1980, and Suleiman and Crosman 1980), and these in turn invest in reinforcing their solidarities.⁵ Practices of categorisation, grouping, self-making and ‘othering’ reflect individual experiences⁶, but are influenced by habitus, where practices and cultural dispositions are informed by the field⁷. While living in constant contact with each other (directly in the same territory and/or as members of an imagined community), members of the national group accumulate their personal experiences and revise their cultural dispositions during the process of collective remembering, forgetting or appreciation. As Bourdieu notes: “When the conditions of existence of which members of a group are the product are very little differentiated, the dispositions which each of them exercises in his practice are confirmed and hence reinforced both by the practice of the other members of the group (one function of symbolic exchanges such as feasts and ceremonies being in favour the circular reinforcement which is the foundation of collective belief) and also by institutions which constitute collective thought as much as they express it, such as language, myth, and art” (1977:167).

Thus through the language and primary socialisation within a national culture the past emerges as a social possession and informs a certain domain of cultural identity. National identity in the form of a Grand Narrative (Lyotard, 1979) emerges as prescriptive and conservative, but it is open to re-conceptualisation through new interpretations. A culture develops models of narration and this array of rhetorical conventions largely determines how the past is understood. For example Kristeva, introducing the phenomenon of intertextuality in her essay “World, Dialogue and Novel” (1969), described how new cultural texts and even new “readings” have an ability to challenge the meanings in the construction or a corpus of texts and to

⁵ See 1.5.a and 1.5.b

⁶ A search for “what we are” is always related to “what we are not” in the dynamic interactions between these questions

⁷ See 2.2.a. and 2.1.d.

reinterpret the present by interfering with and changing the past. Gergen compared historical narrative with autobiographies which had been edited several times during the authors' lives, believing that neither were determined purely by the past, but rather reflected current cultural practices, a revaluation of various relations among events and an assessment of new information and experiences (Gergen 1991:161). The Grand Narrative of national culture, informing national identities, is open-ended (Bauman 1996), subjected to reappraisal and relative rather than objective. Gergen also stresses its relatedness: "...The entire sense of what may be termed *the national reality* is not a picture of "what is the case", but a massive linguistic production...there are only words favoured by particular groups for particular purposes (1991:121)."

2.2.d. Migrants' identities: assimilation vs. isolation

The national identity of migrants emerges as a dynamic balance of solidarities and affiliations, where both the habitus of a receiving country and the collective identity re-imagining play an active role. Although researchers agree that the concepts of nation-state and national culture in their pure form, reflecting particular cultural practices in a specific geographical zone, are not feasible any more, national or/and ethnic identity is still believed to be the key modality of cultural identity.

The identity of migrants encapsulates a negotiation between identities generated through socialisation in ethnically and geographically distinctive values, norms and customs with those of the life-style of the indigenous population. In the article *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (Hall 1990:225), the author points out that the national identities expressed in diaspora are not identical to the "mainland" national self-representation. Hall highlights that "identity as a "production" is never complete, always in process" and also, very importantly, is "inside, not outside of representation" (Hall 1990:225). He stresses that any process of identity formation encapsulates specific features of place and time: "We all write and speak from a particular place and time... What we say is always "in context" positioned" (*ibid*). Any migrants creating and recreating shared identity do so in the context of a definite host country. If diasporic identity emerges, it reflects special aspects of the host culture, patterned with the context in which migrants live and negotiate their "life-

worlds”. New points of references created in this process help to structure their new identities as not simply migrants, but migrants “somewhere”, thus reinforcing symbolic bonds with each other. A process of reconstructing national identities in diasporas, although universal, bears considerable variations in different communities. Thus migrants’ identities are both reflective of and reflect on texts and practices of at least two cultures. These interdiscursive practices result in the emergence of a new diasporic identity, marginal to both the host and the native culture.

The questions of diasporic identity negotiations that are most researched relate to questions of migrants’ communication with the host society. The newcomers are expected to assimilate or isolate themselves from the society; this dilemma has been analysed as integration vs. separatism (preservation). The concept of assimilation (“Melting Pot”) was formulated following the staging of Zangwill’s play of the same title (seen by U.S. President Roosevelt in 1908). Despite the neutral associations of the word assimilation (becoming similar, which does not presuppose ‘absorption’ or ‘homogenisation’), the notion became notorious when it was associated with some compromising political practices⁸ (Brubaker, 1998: 531-548). The concept was a dominant normative and analytical perspective until the publication in 1963 of the influential “Beyond the Melting Pot” by Glazer and Moynihan. An analytical approach allowing for the differentiation of cultural codes of migrants has been formulated and is known under the name *multiculturalism*. The valuing of cultural pluralism and cultural diversity is one of the most important social achievements of the second part of the 20th century. At the same time the theorizing of identity within this frame of reference has been based on a bipolar understanding of identity as a static construction, absolutisation of both cultural differences and specifics, and a perception of integration as a rejection of culture of origin⁹.

⁸ In the same article Brubaker gives examples of such practices, public as well as informal: the ideal of Anglo-conformity through the nativist Americanization movement after World War I; the schoolteachers of the French Third Republic shaming and humiliating those who spoke languages or dialects other than standard French; the harsh Imperial German effort to ‘Germanize’ its largely Polish-speaking eastern borderlands etc.

⁹ Contemporary research points out another danger of institutionalized multiculturalism in that it leads to the long-term structural marginalisation of migrants (Portes and Zhou 1993; Waldinger 1996)

In the latest literature on migration, the notion of integration/assimilation has been seriously transformed. Brubaker stresses a shift from a transitive (seeing immigrants as “meltable” objects) to an intransitive (seeing immigrants as subjects) understanding of assimilation (Brubaker 1998). It is argued here that, through the analysis of migrants’ identity discourses “inside” diasporas, questions of migrants’ integration are developed even further and enhanced by an understanding of the process.

2.2.e. Migrants’ identities: various levels of identification

Earlier in this study¹⁰ diasporic identity was defined through solidarities with the native land, solidarities between migrants and solidarities with the host country. The above features are expressed through a combination of discourses of the native culture, host culture and a diasporic one. The understanding of this schemata will now be deepened by investigating exactly how displaced people understand their native land, how they perceive their host culture and how their own self-identification is reconstructed through their communications in the diaspora¹¹.

Self-identification with the place of origin is powerful. Migrants’ identity is embedded within distinctive national (and/or ethnic) or regional identity and encapsulates historically defined cultural norms and values. For example, organisational studies provide empirical proof that national culture-centric algorithms of behaviour are generally more influential than professional identities determined by personal choice of occupation (for example, see Schneider 2002). At the conscious level the affiliations are formed by primary socialisation, but much of the coding “is programmed” at the out-of awareness level. Discussing this process Hall points out that those cultural identities are “always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture” (Hall, 1990:225).

¹⁰ see 1.5.

¹¹ See also 2.4.b and 2.5.b

Solidarities to the native land/culture and the re-imagining of the host culture are seen to be heterogeneous processes. There is a growing body of research reflecting on a variety of readings of what is a native land. First of all, there are various levels of such loyalties: local, regional, national. For example, Meinhof and Galasinski conducted an ethnographic study in a town divided into two communities by the Polish-German border and came to the conclusion that “the most meaningful construction of identity by our Polish informants remains that of being Polish.” They found that in the case of German informants there was evidence of a multi-layering of different forms of identity “with the national dimension considerably less important than the regional, and no more important than the town/village or even the transnational levels. In that sense post-war Germans fit better the post-modern concept of multiple and hybrid identities than their Polish neighbours.” (Meinhof and Galasinski, 2002:80).

Although this study illustrates that various levels of territorial identity constructions exist in marginalised settlement even without migration, the next example is directly connected to the process of displacement. Studying communication of migrants from India, Radhakrishnan noted that they are reinventing their national identity as an ethnic minority identity (Asian-Indian) in the host country, but this re-imagining is paradoxically constructed as “nation building” (in Benedict Anderson’s terms¹²), because migrants ignore local differences important to the country of origin: for example the differences in culture, cuisine and customs of the state of Rajavastan from the state of Kerala. Radhakrishnan concludes that the “ethnic selves” of migrants are “very different from identities within India” (Radhakrishnan, 1994: 182). The concept of *compalinissimo*, described earlier,¹³ also presupposes that Italian migrants in Australia demonstrate various levels of solidarities with the native land (from locality to the national one) depending on the content of communications.

Lebedeva researches Russian-speaking migrants’ decisions to emigrate and concludes that the movement itself may become central to their self-conception in their wish to avoid self-identification with fixed and separate societies and cultures

¹² See 1.5.b.

¹³ See 1.5.a.

(Levedeva 2001)¹⁴. Rapport and Dawson introduced the notion of “migrants of identity” and argued that, in their life world behaviour codes, communication routines and techniques, styles of dress and address, jokes and opinions may become a basis for self-identification (Rapport and Dawson 1998).

Therefore it is important to reflect on the fact that the native country and culture are imagined differently within the same diaspora depending on personal, generational, political etc. experiences of migrants.

2.2.f. Migrants’ identity and the host culture

Relationships between migrants and the host culture and their loyalties to their new place of settlement have always been in the analytical focus of studies on migration and diaspora (starting with the works of the Chicago sociological school and leading up to the current interest due to the danger of international terrorism). But any analysis of the identity discourse of migrants constantly opens new research perspectives due to the multifaceted character of this problem.

Displacement through the process of migration always encourages a renegotiation of identity and the creation of new meanings. The process of migration and the exposure to new historic contexts and cultural experiences highlight the role of subconscious elements of identity discourse and allow them to be reflected at the conscious level. As Hall points out, “identity does not proceed in a straight unbroken line from some fixed origin” (Hall 1990:226).

Identity is patterned with a set of relationships, a unique hierarchy of personal social roles and demands rooted in individual primary socialisation, but at the same time migrants are subjected to a life-long secondary socialisation (enculturation). As Hall puts it: “The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual past, since our relation to it, like the child’s relation to the mother, is always-already ‘after the break’” (*ibid*). Interpreting the process of identity reproduction

¹⁴ For example, many Russian migrants of the post-revolutionary wave rejected their associations with Soviet Russia; some migrants of the “dissident period” did not want to see perestroika changes. See 1.2.c and 1.2.d.

based on the dramatic history of black Caribbeans, Hall suggests two vectors operate simultaneously, “the vector of similarity and continuity and the vector of difference and rupture” (1990:227).

The vector of difference marks distinctions between the identity of migrants and their compatriots back home, as well as between migrants and the host community. The integration of newcomers implies various influences: the introduction to another language, addressing a new cultural system with a different frame of references and a new set of cultural prescriptions, and the conflict of existing cultural codes with new decoding practices. As a result the process of appropriation and participation in the host identity discourse is seen to be a differentiated process. Morawska, in her book *Insecure Prosperity* (1996) describing Jewish populations in small-town America during the first half of the twentieth century, argues that the emergence of migrants’ sense of belonging and their self-identification with the host culture (she uses the term ethnicization) is far from a homogeneous process but takes place in at least four different dimensions (economic, political, social, religious), each with their own specific characteristics. She showed that assimilation can proceed quickly and be encompassing in one dimension, but can be slower and more partial in another.

Migrants’ identity negotiations are highly sensitive to the host cultural context and responsive to the agencies through which narratives are solicited. A considerable volume of post-colonial study discusses this aspect. Contemporary research does not simply restrict itself to a discussion of positive/negative attitudes to migrants in society and problems of social inclusion, but attempts to appreciate the changes dialectically. In order to investigate how migration affects identities, Penitsch conducted a case study of Moroccan students who came to Germany in the early 1990s for educational purposes. He concludes that as a result of such experiences personal identities may be both continued or perpetuated as well as enforced or generated through ascription from outside (the host society) and in terms of self-ascription (Penitsch 2003).

Some researchers hold that diasporic relationships weaken immigrants' integration in the receiving country and that maintenance of special ties with people of the same origin represents an alternative to programmes of immigrant integration. For example, Guarnizo and Smith warn against a romantic and utopian image of "transnationalism from below". They point out that migrants often take refuge in accentualised and ethnicised identities: "These identities forged from below are often no less essentialized than the hegemonic projects of nation states" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998:24). Questions on the extent to which solidarities of migrants provide help in coping with discrimination and prejudice or in reinforcing resistant identities are yet to be empirically researched in various diasporas.

Another view celebrates "liberation" and "a search for one's true self" in imagined communities as diasporas. For example Mathews (2000), in his studies of identity discourse in contemporary Japan, describes cases when people consciously make a choice of their national identity, choosing not only their national belonging, but also re-imagining their temporal and ethical belonging. The third related approach declares a certain "portability of national identity". For example, Canclini (1999) describes the life of temporary workers from Mexico in the USA and argues that due to the frequency and intensity of such migrations their culture was "deterritorialised"¹⁵. Such a phenomenon emerges as a result of regular, but temporary, displacements and (sometimes) a low social status of the native culture of the migrants.

Appadurai (1990) in 'Disjuncture and Difference in Global Cultural Economy' wrote: 'Deterritorialization in general is one of the central forces of the modern world, since it brings labouring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics...'. Migrants literally take their local culture to the new place, continually adjusting it in line with developments to the culture "back home", their indigenous territory. This cultural strategy involves

¹⁵ The concept of deterritorialisation in connection with finance, media etc. was formulated in 1990 by Appadurai, and was later expanded to individual psyches, social collectives, literary forms, as well as marginalised and colonised cultures.

displaced people bringing their culture to a new place, ignoring new experiences, non-involvement with the host life-style, and living according to the norms and values of the native culture.

It is believed that in modern diasporas a tendency towards claiming membership of more than one place is pronounced. Migrant communities, according to Alejandro Portes, comprise “[...] dense networks across political borders created by immigrants in their quest for economic advancement and social recognition. Through these networks, an increasing number of people are able to live dual lives. Participants are often bilingual, move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and pursue economic, political and cultural interests that require their presence in both” (Portes 1997: 812). Some migrants eagerly adopt the habits and code of behaviour of the host nation, while back in their home country they continue to lead the life of their compatriots. Lotman (2001:338) labelled these people poly-cultural (*поликультурные*) and compared their ability to slip from one cultural paradigm into another to their regularly changing their clothes. The question is: does this social and cultural membership in societies across borders imply cross-penetration of identity discourses, or does it represent an emergence of a “parallel” national identity?

2.2.g. Marginality of diasporic discourses

This research holds that identity cannot exist as an unchanging and/or unchangeable meta-category and that any form of migration implies changes of identity to some extent. Bommers (2005) stresses that some knowledge of the new society is necessary to function there and therefore migrants have to adjust. The process of adjustment varies widely: Bommers divides it into four dimensions (or phases): cognitive, structural, social and identificational assimilation. The scholar shows that cognitive assimilation is necessarily linked to the settlement period, during which migrants usually adjust themselves structurally as well as socially. The classical interpretation of assimilation assumes that the last phase (identifying with the norms and values of the society of settlement) is the logical and inevitable outcome of the process. However Bommers (ibid) insists that the four dimensions of assimilation are not

automatically linked, and those migrants and even their descendants may be structurally assimilated without identifying with the new country. A dimension-differentiation model allows for the integration of power relations (class/gender) into the analysis. The use of such models, both in historic and modern perspectives, makes cross-cultural comparisons more transparent.

One of the least researched questions is related to the investigation of influences of the host culture and everyday realities as an agency of change on migrants' identity discourses. Kristeva's ideas of "transplantation of a narrative" (Kristeva 1969) from one culture to another can be called upon to explain the processes of identity reconstruction initiated by migration. For example, Orr (2003:66, 67) theorizes possible mechanisms of cross-cultural influences in sets of interdiscursive practices. She describes the possibilities of such a "transplantation" being: a "traditional influence" - people influencing each other, or a narrative influencing people, an "imitation in the transmission of cultural texts" – e.g. mimicking, copying of various patterns, and an "influence as recognition" - appreciating through conscious changes¹⁶.

Thus, the dynamics of identity reconstruction by displaced people should not be seen as mosaics of impressions, but rather as a structure where meanings are given by the displaced people: "What mediates between difference and identity is structure - the way differences are articulated into a significant pattern, as is in the narrative. Culture as identity values collective particularity" (Eagleton, 2001:73, 54). In the same vein, Lucassen believes that a receiving culture provides a matrix for negotiating identities, recognising that the host society is split along the same lines which are relevant to the way immigrants assimilate. These alternative differentiations are to some extent linked with power relations and can be applied to studies of long-term developments.

¹⁶ These models suggested by Orr are surprisingly similar to the modes of cultural appropriation described and exemplified by Lotman (this dissertation 3.4., 3.7.c. and 4.4.)

The dimension-differentiation model (Morawska, Lucassen) is very useful for analyses of integration processes over generations¹⁷. The diversity of migrants in terms of their ethnic roots, social upbringing and gender/age differences is recognised in connection with a variety of modes and time frames for identity negotiations.

2.3. RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDENTITIES

In order to analyse the dynamics of the cultural identity discourse within Russian communities abroad it is necessary to investigate the concept of the Russian national identity in a historic perspective. This discussion is complicated by the fact that, according to contemporary scholars, the concept itself is self-contradictory. For example, Billington discusses internal contradictions of the Russian national identity discourse at the level of individuals and groups (Billington 2004; 135-166), while Hosking states that Russia at large still has fundamental questions of identity unresolved (Hosking 2002:610) and alludes to “the variety of identities which Russia has assumed over the centuries” (ibid: Preface).

Even the notion itself is an inheritably ambiguous one and can be interpreted as an ethnic term (ethnically Russian *Russkii*), a political concept (citizen of the Russian federation – *Rossiiskii*), a geographical reality (somebody living within the territory of Russia, which again can be defined differently – *zhitel' Rossii*), historically (in terms of imperial and Soviet legacies – *sovetskii chelovek*) or linguistically (native language – *russkoiazychnyi chelovek*). The latter might comprise individuals whose mother-tongue is Russian language but who don't perceive themselves as Russians.¹⁸

¹⁷ Instead of using the widely accepted functionalist differentiation based on social structures (family, school, work and other institutions), Lucassen introduces alternative social and cultural differentiations focusing on religion, class, gender and localism versus regionalism.

¹⁸ Hosking defines several ways in which the Russian nation can be broadly defined today:

- by Russia's imperial mission,
- as the creator and sustainer of a great multiethnic empire,
- as a nation of East Slavs,
- as a community of Russian speakers, regardless of their ethnic origin or current civic status (since Russian speakers are so scattered, this would imply some concept of civic status independent of frontiers),
- as the Russian Federation with citizenship independent of ethnic origin, or

The word Russian can also embrace people of the Russian diaspora, for example those who are bilingual, ethnically non-Russian, have never lived in the USSR and do not have Russian passports, but still define themselves as Russians¹⁹. When researchers (e.g. Milner-Gulland 1997) attempt to define Russianness in terms of language as well as “the sum of such features of a shared way of life as received social attitudes, folk wisdom and customs, notions of justice, symbolic systems, religion”, they have to admit that this definition is “too fluid and complex for well defined answers, particularly if investigated diachronically” (Milner-Gulland 1997:38).

The current study does not attempt to focus on one separate aspect or understanding of the Russian national identity, but rather sees identity negotiations in the diaspora as a multifaceted phenomenon, with the above perspectives playing a role of cultural dispositions (Bourdieu 1977)²⁰ in the national identity discourse. Russian identity is shown as a variety of discourses influenced by political and historical developments, geographical realities and cultural heritage, differentiated at the same time through various modalities (gender, generation, occupation, place of origin). These are dynamic phenomena patterned with a specific habitus (*ibid*), but at the same time open-ended to further modification. In the following, firstly some cultural dispositions will be marked with regards to the geographic and historic conditions that have produced them. Then the imperial legacy (Russian Empire and the USSR) in terms of national identity discourse and its theorisation will be discussed, followed by an analysis of questions of othering within the national identity discourse, primarily the dilemmas of Russia and the West. Based on the above, the literature on the role of migrants and migration in the Russian cultural discourse will be critically analysed.

2.3.a. Social geography as cultural disposition

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- as the Russian Federation, with preferential status for ethnic Russians.

¹⁹ Protasova (2004) exemplifies the above in her research of second-generation ethnic Finns who emigrated to Finland with their Russian-speaking parents from the Russian territories and who self-identify as Russians.

²⁰ See this dissertation 2.1.d.

This subchapter aims at marking some features inherited by the contemporary national identity discourse from the earliest period. Bourdieu notes that the cultural dispositions rooted in deep history influence us the most: “It is yesterday’s man who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet, we do not sense this man of the past, because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves” (1977:79). Svetlana Boym outlines the importance of “cultural common places, recurrent narratives that are perceived as natural in a given culture but in fact were naturalized and their historical, political, or literary origins forgotten or disguised” (Boym 1994:4). Various authors (Hosking, Lotman, Williams), writing about Russian national identity, reflect on influences of social geography, early history and economic organisations as special conditions that inculcate the contemporary identity discourse.

Following the rich tradition of research (starting probably with Kluchevskii), various contemporary scholars highlight the importance of territory for the Russian national identity. Milner-Gulland states that “spaciousness has seemed a Russian birthright” and writes that the importance of the size of the country can hardly be overemphasized (Milner-Gulland 1997:4). Land was considered a communal property that possessed sacred value and was cherished as a living thing, tightly connected with other cultural values.

Rancour-Laferrier undertook research into the meaning of the land in a motherly sense as portrayed through folk sayings, various ceremonials and artistic depictions (Rancour-Laferrier 1995:138-140). The scholar concluded that motherhood, which represents “the fundamental category” in Russia (Berdiaev 1990(1918), 8-36), is tightly connected to the mythical power of the native land (Rancour-Laferrier 1995:138-140).

Hosking gives an extensive account of various influences of geography on the development of the nation. He looks at climate (“economically underdeveloped empire, situated in a region of extreme temperatures”), landscape (“vast open spaces,

wooden spaces, risk-prone environment”), agriculture (marginal and vulnerable) and diet (“struggling on the edge of surviving”) (Hosking 2002:9) in order to investigate how the above contribute to forming the habitus of the Russian society in a historic perspective and to examine practices which have determined (and at the same time are determined by) the Russian national character. Their multiple layers of influence are invested in the multiplicity of identities of Russia.

Various practices in Russian history were predisposed by social geography, but geographical features do not fully explain them. For example, Hosking shows that some features of the Russian way of life have been “upgraded” through history into the cultural dispositions that influence contemporary practices throughout the habitus. Reflecting on the absence of civic society in the Russian Empire, Hosking notes that “because of its size and vulnerability, Russia needed the structure of an authoritarian state” (2002:5) but, in practice, because of the extent of the territory and the backwardness of the economy, the state could not directly control the lives of most of the population. This resulted in strong bonding at the top of society as well as expressed solidarities in the base of society, but “in between institutions” linking them were weak (for more details on the weak social and civic structures in the Russian Empire see e.g. Hosking 2002, Gooding 1996). Taking into account the specific situation of historically extended serfdom, Milner-Gulland notes the alienation of the serfs from any class affiliations, and speculates that this fact has created an ambiguous attitude towards social status and societal justice, because such alienation “probably embodied true Russianness in itself” (1997:81). Hosking describes the traditional system of social hierarchy as “networks of interlocking patron-clients relationships” and highlights its persistence in contemporary Russian public life as obstructing the process of generating a sense of civic society in post-Soviet Russia.

At the same time, traditional society was cemented by the communal character of peasants’ life, extremely strong bonds being produced by the customs of mutual help and rules of joined responsibility. This living within secluded communities produced uneasy relationships between the self and the community *mir*, reflected in

contradictions between the concepts of *volia* (liberty, possibility of doing everything one wants to do) and *dolia* (share, destiny) (Milner-Gulland 1997:18). Hosking notes that “egalitarianism and mutual harmony were not often achieved, but they remained ideals” (2002:16). An ideal in itself is an important philosophical category in the Russian mentality. Likhachev believes that “a rift (*разрыв*) between a national ideal and national reality”, which had occurred in ancient times, created a disposition for idealistic imagined constructions (Likhachev 1990:519). The set of values, created by the communal way of life, encapsulated the cherished equality, the search for Pravda (justice, fairness, morality, truth). The isolated life of communities, based at the same time on close relationships and collective activities, promoted uniformity of values and orientations in Russia. This uniformity and negative perception of differences was expressed here to a greater degree than was apparent in the creation of the habitus of any open society as described by Bourdieu: “One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a common sense world endowed with the objectivity secured by the consensus on the meanings of practices and the world, in other words of harmonisation of agents’ experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings, of similar or identical experiences)” (Bourdieu 1977:80).

The intense process of othering emerges as a by-product of such a consensus of meanings and was of special significance for the Russian national identity. Hosking believes that “Russians have always been actively conscious of the distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders”, an attitude which they readily transfer to the international plane. [...] The phrase *u nas* (in our village, at our workplace, in our country) is very evocative and frequently used; Russians are always surprised that English has no precise equivalent” (Hosking 2002:17). Hosking explains that this is a product of independent but at the same time close-knit communal living; however it can also be interpreted as an attempt to shape and formulate personal identity during a process of intense self-reflection²¹.

²¹ For example, intense othering may be a sign of constant borrowing from and adjusting to outside influences. These phenomena are noted by Schopflin in his analysis of minority identities (1997,

The national identity discourse was not shaped merely through stressing differences, but has also, as some researchers note, constantly reproduced its “binary character”. Hosking also notes that “*nash*” is not merely a description but a value judgement: “The contrast between *my* (we) and *oni* (they) is very marked and the judgement of *ne nash* (he is not one of us) correspondingly damaging” (ibid). Using the Foucauldian terminology adopted later in this study, it means that Russians demonstrate a tendency to construct differences in terms of normality and abnormality in the process of self-identification (see this dissertation 4.3.). In the same vein Lotman and Uspenskii write about “dualism and the absence of a neutral axiological zone” in Russian public discourses, where the new fails to provide continuity, but is regarded as “eschatological replacements of everything” (Lotman and Uspenskii 1984:5). Binarism is expressed in the separate genres of art and literature: e.g. Milner-Gulland writes about binary oppositions that have structured Russian folk beliefs, but can also be observed in other social practices (1977:90). Hosking utilises the binary mechanism by taking the value-loaded oppositions between “*pravda*” and “*nepravda*”, us and them, at the levels of state and local communities and extrapolating them to the “tendency to seek extreme solutions to the problems and to lurch from one set of cultural patterns to their diametrical opposite” (2002:22). He also states that this “bipolar world found its reflection in many aspects of the Russian politics and culture” (ibid: 26) and exemplifies the latter by describing political reforms through Russian history as the “tendency to introduce reforms in total packages, rejecting previous ways as utterly wrong” (ibid:176).

The history and social geography of Russia presupposed to a great degree other features of the national identity discourse, namely its imperial tendencies and the dilemmas of Russia and the West.

2.3.b. Russia as an Empire: discourse of power

The cultural dispositions described above have both taken shape gradually and influenced people over many centuries, but the notion of the “Russian people” only

2000). Hosking also states that borrowing was one of the active practices assisting the process of Russian state building (2002: preface).

became a component of the collective consciousness from, at the earliest, the late 17th century (Hosking 2002, Gooding 1996, Greenfeld 1990). Benedict Anderson showed that during the process of nation-building some local customs and attitudes have been ignored while others acquired a symbolic status and were propagandised as basic features of national unity (1983:5)²². The idea of the Russian national identity was connected to the process of nation building, which in Russia coincided with the emergence of the Russian Empire as a European phenomenon. As Hosking suggests, Russian nationhood “has never existed outside the framework of Empire, which has left it stunned and underdeveloped” (Hosking 2002:610).

In Europe the process of national identity building started earlier than in Russia. According to Greenfeld, nationalism emerged in 16th century England, started to spread across Europe in the 18th century and since then “the emergence of national identities in other countries was no longer a result of original creation, but rather of the importation of an already existing idea” (Greenfeld 1990:550), although the reasons for such radical changes of identity were unique to every country. Gooding agrees that nationalism was “hijacked” (Gooding 1996:51) from the West at the beginning of the 19th century in order to enforce the Russian state. Hosking adds to this debate, specifying that “by the later decades of the 17th century Russia was already a Eurasian empire, heir to the lands of the Golden Horde and of more besides” (Hosking 2002:175), but in order to keep its status and given its geopolitical situation, it had no alternative but to become a European power in terms of its political and cultural interests (*ibid*:181).

Hosking states that, at that time, Russia represented a type of Asian autocracy, being “a multiethnic empire without a dominant nation, ruled by a dynasty and heterogeneous aristocracy [...]” (2002:5). The reorganisation of such an Empire was connected with its turn to the West, where nationalism was one of the features available to borrow. At the very beginning the idea of national identity represented an elitist concept in terms of those who were interested in acquiring it. Greenfeld believes that national identities introduced to the nobility during the period of the Petrine reforms created a more secure status for the elite because the Russian nobles

²² See also 1.5.b.

were called to serve not only the tsar personally, but something beyond him (State or country): “They were beginning to experience the therapeutic effects of national pride, and their identity as noble men was giving way to the national identity of Russians” (Greenfeld 1990:568).²³

At later stages, military education for both the nobility and the Russian army became a nursery for imperial nationalism. While noting an inherent disjunction between the state elites and the rest of the population, Hosking believes that the army constituted the social base for imperial Russian consciousness “which was weak or absent in the villages” (2002:197): “...Soldiers became in a sense imperial citizens [...]. This is why tsars identified themselves so strongly with the army, seeking in it the microcosm of an empire, whose solidarity elsewhere was shadowy and uncertain” (*ibid*). At the same time Smith, contemplating the range of successful Russian military campaigns (“against the Mongol hordes in the fourteenth century...; against the Poles, the Swedes and the Turks in the early modern period; and against Napoleon in 1812), specifies that the narratives of military victories were combined with ones of moral superiority: “...the dominant self-image has been sacrificial rather than triumphalist. The spiritual qualities of moral goodness and patience, together with physical courage, are held to have overcome evil and cunning (Smith 1990:21)”.

Debates over whether the USSR can be formally called an Empire are still ongoing (for an overview see Motyl’ 2001), with many scholars referring to it by this name due to the control functions of the central government over vast multiethnic territories, as well as the hegemonic tendencies of its policies. Soviet identity was powered by ideas of the USSR as a superpower that had assisted the liberation of several European Nations and “guaranteed” their stability. Official discourses of egalitarianism simplified the task of recreating the imperial citizenship and identity discourse under different “Soviet” labels.²⁴ As had earlier been the case in the

²³ Some researchers (for ex. Manchester,1998) also point out that by the end of the 19th century the ideas of national identity became a key-stone of the new class (*popovichi*, Russian Orthodox clergymen's sons) and the idea of the uniqueness of the Russian soul.

²⁴ For more see 2.3.e, 2.3.d., 2.3.h.

Russian Empire, the army continued to play an important role in society. In the Soviet period it was supported by heroic epic narratives of several military campaigns. The role of wars in the construction of worldwide nationalism is widely referred to in literature (for an overview see Kaldor 2004:179) and it is relevant to the identity politics of the USSR which was characterized by “chronic insecurity; a tendency to keep the population mobilised as if for war” (Gooding 1996:5). The philosophy of a “besieged fortress” (*ibid*) was categorised as one of the dominant features of Soviet consciousness (Kantor 2002, Smith 1990). Even in post-Soviet Russia, sociological data confirm that military campaigns are still considered the basic identity factor²⁵.

The radical social changes following 1917 did not change the character of the national identity discourse, demonstrating the resistance and continuity of the concepts formed earlier. Some scholars believe that it was a result of the politics of identity artfully chosen by the new rulers: “The Bolsheviks broke down the preceding political institutions of Russia and cleverly adjusted the people's everyday notions to the new reality... (Sikevich 2002)”. Others theorize such continuity as inertia of the cultural field, which instructs habitus, and through the habitus reproduces established practices. For example, in the same way as Lotman does, Hosking draws examples from the 18th as well as 20th centuries to highlight the dualism of social models in the Russian Empire and the USSR: “ In Russia the most radical changes, despite appearances, actually reinforce the traditions of the society they are meant to change”(Hosking 2002:213).

Barlett and Edmondson argue that at the beginning of the twentieth century, national politics of the Russian state conceptualised its unity on the basis of a messianic role for Russians and the Empire (1998: 167-180). Hosking notes the continuity of the narratives of a chosen people and a prophetic land in the Russian identity discourse,

²⁵ For example, Sikevich (2002) found that 59.8% of the citizens of St. Petersburg consider the Great Patriotic War the central event of national history, while for only 2.1% of residents the war was associated with the tragedy and losses of the siege of Leningrad. In the pre-revolutionary history of Russia, 10.6% of respondents considered the greatest event to be the Patriotic War of 1812. The researcher also stated that militarist values are not expressed by respondents: more than 99% categorised the war in Chechnya as “zlo” (evil).

beginning with the Old Believers, and points out its connection with imperial identity discourse, but with the alternative concepts of national identity, including “the distinctive Russian variant of socialism” with “its passionate belief in the people, its expectation both of imminent destruction and of subsequent perfect society” (Hosking 1997:209).²⁶ Emerging scholarship holds that the above narratives are actively appropriated by the contemporary Russian concept of new patriotism (for example, Lawson and White forthcoming).

Russia existed as an Empire until the post-Soviet period, and various scholars attempt to interpret how the new realities influence the national identity discourse. For example, Billington states that, with the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, “Russia became, for the first time in history, a nation rather than an empire” (2004:47). He writes about “such sudden, disorientating change” which encourages Russians “to rethink their politics, economics, history, and place in the world. In their state of freedom, they have produced one of the most wide-ranging discussions of a nation’s identity in modern history” (ibid: 48). Milner-Gulland contrarily asserts that the habitants of Russia have celebrated the loss of imperial status: “ [Peter the Great] left behind him the Empire of Rossiya – a legacy that Russians have on the whole found distinctly uncomfortable, and sloughed off with some relief with the collapse of the communist state”(Milner-Gulland 1997:80). Hosking insists that “Russia has entered the new millennium with fundamental questions about her identity still unsettled” (2002:610) and interprets imperial legacy as some “shadow identities” (*ibid*) that complicate Russia’s adjustments to contemporary realities.

2.3.c. Russia and the West

The creation of the Russian Empire was, as mentioned above, by its nature a westernising influence. However during several centuries of intense borrowing from European cultures, the Russian national identity discourse has imagined and re-imagined the West as its great Other, constantly changing the content of the notions “Europe” and “the West” to reflect changes in Russia itself.

²⁶ The scholar believes that messianic energy was a basic element of a “long suppressed national myth” (1996:210)

From its Christianisation till roughly the seventeenth century, Russia regarded Byzantine culture as superior and attempted to copy it. Among the social inventions and political institutions copied from Asiatic practice, Hosking lists tribute and taxation, the census, military conscription, and even the village community with its ethos of joint responsibility and mutual surveillance²⁷ (Hosking 2002:21). The change in cultural orientation was connected to changes in geopolitical interests: “Russia’s elite culture was reoriented in the opposite direction, towards Western Europe, where the most attractive commercial opportunities lay, but from where the most serious threats also came” (*ibid*). The positive image of the West at that time was constructed through oversimplified distinctions between Western dynamism, reliability and progress, and the symbolic marking of the East as afflicted by superstition, fatalism, and stagnation. Europe was also associated with education, civilisation and “usefulness” (perceived as a synonym of nobility in the *époque*). Greenfeld describes the reaction in Russian society using the psychological term *ressentiment*, which is connected with suppressed feelings of envy and hatred. It resulted in an ambiguous attitude towards Europe, coined by Fonvisin: “How can we remedy two contradictory and most harmful prejudices: the first, that everything with us is awful, while in foreign lands everything is good; the second, that in foreign lands everything is awful, while with us everything is good” (Greenfeld, 1990 : 222).

This contradictory attitude can be explained by the binary model of Russian culture with its tendency to think in terms of opposing values (see Lotman and Uspenskii quoted earlier), prioritising essences over processes. Billington reflects on the dramatic and storming character of borrowing foreign social ideas which he calls the “old Russian tradition of suddenly instituting sweeping changes by adopting wholesale the model of their principal foreign adversary” (Billington 2004:48). Billington also marks some pitfalls of such an approach which lay in adopting the final product without creative adaptation: “Russians have repeatedly tended to adopt the end product of another civilisation, without replicating the process of thought and institution building that made it possible” (*ibid*). Given that there was no single universal European culture to borrow from (for example, Hosking distinguishes the

²⁷ The latter in a way contradicts his own conclusions that such forms of social organisation were organically grown from the geography of Rus’.

influences of Catholicism, which came through the Ukrainian and Dutch neo-stoic models, which both differ significantly from each other and are strikingly different from the cultural model of Russia), the appropriation of western models was naturally contradictory.

As a result, the active borrowing and copying from the West climaxed in establishing oppositions to the “original”, rather than the simple incorporation of Russia in the European civilisation of that time. Williams highlights the paradox that while intellectual categories of nationalism were borrowed from Western thought, the same categories enabled Russians “to imagine themselves different from, hostile to, and superior over the West” (Williams 1999:2). European philosophy enabled the Russian “gentry-intelligentsia” to categorise the superiority (by innate goodness) of the most “uncultured” (in the European sense) subjects over western civilisation: “the concept that the Russians had certain advantages over the West precisely because they were backward” (Williams 1999:17). He shows how one of the key-stones of the Russian identity discourse, namely the idea of the moral superiority of the Russian peasant whose image embodies national “soul” symbolising the virtues lost by the West and the Westernised elite of Russia, was “stimulated by Rousseau’s *noble savage*, Herder’s discovery of language and song as a heart and soul of the nation, and Carlyle’s anti-industrial criticism of men with ‘soul extinct but stomach well alive’” (Williams 1999:5). Williams also refers to the fact that the ideas of Slavophiles in rejecting the West were influenced and induced by western, in particular German, idealism. Thus the Russian national discourse used the language and the structure of western discourses to enable them to define their own specificity.

The relationships between the Russian Empire’s intellectual life and western culture could not be represented as a straightforward borrowing, but as attempts to tailor the Russian identity. Schopflin stresses that the programming of the national identity is “about perceptions rather than historically validated truths” (Schopflin 1997:19), and images and narratives created for the nation-building project symbolically mark the process of othering and self-defining. The idea of Europe emerged as “the main Other in relation to which the idea of Russia is defined” (Neumann 1996:1), and

represents “the culture in whose mirror we better appreciate our own” (Hosking 2002: Preface).

Western philosophical concepts not only helped in conceptualizing the Russian national identity, but also allowed the West and Europe to be re-imagined by the emerging discourse. Greenfeld notes that “the West was an integral, indelible part of the Russian national consciousness” (Greenfeld 1990:254). For Russian nationhood, Europe and the West became a myth as described by Schopflin: “one of the ways in which collectivities – in this context, more especially nations – establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own system of morality and values. In this sense therefore, myth is a set of beliefs, usually put forth as a narrative, held by a community upon itself (Schopflin 1997:19)”. The Russian community not only created an image of itself in comparison with the real West, but symbolically re-imagined “the West”.

In the Russian national identity discourse, Europe emerges not as a cultural and political reality, but as a construct of mental geography. Lotman states that the Russian Westerners of the 19th century were not interested in the realities of life in Europe, but preferred discussing their image of Europe and their perceptions of westernisation. For example, he retells several extracts from 18th-19th century memoirs to show that while the protagonists “spiritually lived” in Europe, they were reluctant to consider Europe in its mundane form. Lotman concludes that the myth of Europe was indeed (in Schopflin’s words) held by a community upon itself, where the narrative of the myth played a role of a “higher reality”²⁸ (Lotman 2001:330). Lotman also concludes that “contacts with the real life in the West often turned into tragedies, and a *zapadnik* became a critic of the West” (*ibid*). In the same vein, analysing the intellectual activity of Russian émigrés in the West after the revolution, Williams states that from their European perspective they started re-imagining Russia in an opposite, non-western direction, referring to “the general decline of the West” (Williams 1999:149).

²⁸ Translation is mine.

The image of the West and Europe in Soviet times kept its ambiguity (for example, Europe was widely praised as the birthplace of socialism and an embodiment of civilisation in the past), but was more rigidly constructed at the level of official ideology as the “vicious other” in the contemporality. A positive attitude to the West signified a free-minded person, and was connected to the ideas of emigration.

2.3.d. The official trinity: attempting to make cultural dispositions explicit

Russian national identity as a “cultural artifact, project of social engineering” (Smith 1997:36) took more than a century to be fully shaped²⁹.

National identities in Russia have been conceptualized to summarize the process of constructing an empire in the middle of the 19th century³⁰. The official formula for Russian nationhood was proposed by Count Uvarov, Minister of Education, welcomed by Tsar Nicholas I, and represented a backbone of official identity politics. Three categories of the official concept of the national identity: *самодержавие* (autocracy), *православие* (orthodoxy), and *народность* (social cohesion)³¹ reflected the specifics of Russian history as well as the politics of its territorial expansions and development³².

Returning to the question of Soviet vs Russian-imperial legacies, an underlying continuity of official identity politics in Russia can be observed. Perrie highlights parallels between the “two notorious trinities of the Russian cultural history”: the formula for “Official Nationality” in the reign of Nicholas I (mentioned above) and the Soviet one, combining *народность* together with ideological correctness (*идейность*) and Party-mindedness (*партийность*) “in the dogma of Soviet socialist realism” (Perrie 1998:28). Based on Bourdieu’s work, this ideology is approached here not only as instructive for identity formation but as a product of a discourse already present in the national identity: even when practices “appear as the

²⁹ Although identity has a discursive nature it can be represented in a fixed form as an entity when shaped as a political program or project.

³⁰ Some early attempts to describe features of the national character have been made starting from the late 17th century.

³¹ The third component of the formula is sometimes translated as *nationality*.

³² Hosking believes that “the motifs of land, prince and faith [...] defined the essence and the boundaries of Rus’ from early times” (Hosking 1997:200)

realisation of the explicit, and explicitly stated, purposes of a project or plan” (Bourdieu, 1977:72), those practices are produced by the habitus “as the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever changing situations” and “are only apparently determined by the future” (*ibid*).

As it was discussed earlier (2.3.b. and 2.3.a.), strong autocratic power emerged as a cultural disposition and was supported by various practices along the history of the country. Historians conceptualise state power in Russia as a driving and dynamic force, which was invariably represented by an autocratic ruler. Greenfeld notes that “among the European societies, it [Russia] was a site of remarkably precocious absolutism” (Greenfeld 1990:552). At the same time, this was the only way of state governance able to guarantee the territorial integrity of the country which conditioned the existence of any Empire.

Scholars accept that under the conditions of early capitalism with weak economic interconnections between the regions and unreliable infrastructure in the vast territories, central management and planning played an extremely important role in the development of the country. Gooding stresses the impact of the borderlessness of territory on the character of governance: “Why were Russians, even educated ones, so ready to accept the absolutism of the tsars? ...Various answers can be given to this, but all in one way or another come back to the basic fact of geography...The Russians, then, belong to the wide, open and inhospitable expanses between Europe proper and Asia, but there were no natural geographical features to say exactly where they belonged, to mark out and define a secure territory for them...Much in later Russian life can be put down to the impact of this calamity: chronic insecurity; a tendency to keep the population mobilised as if for war even when no war was on the horizon; and a feeling that strong centralised leadership – precisely what the Kievians had not had – was vital if further disasters were to be avoided. That centralisation of power is the price to be paid for survival is an assumption which few Russians have over the centuries felt able to challenge” (Gooding 1996:5). For the locally bound, mainly peasant Russian population a strong central power of a monarch invested a sense of stability. For a nation in the process of territorial expansions, *самодержавие* conditioned and symbolised the integrity of Empire.

The Soviet State as a new autocratic power inherited an idea of strong central management and planning, re-imagining them as a part of Soviet identity. Etatism, which became one of the basic features of Soviet identity, was connected to the images of superpower and stronghold. *Державность* (stateness) continued to symbolise stability and territorial unity. Vera Toltz highlights a role of territory in the Soviet consciousness with the dominant image of the USSR as a superpower, noting that “by the early 1950s, the annexation of all non-Russian territories by Russia came to be regarded as a historically progressive and largely voluntary phenomenon” (Toltz 1998:271). Imperial policies of the 18th and 19th centuries were echoed by the ideas of the Warsaw Treaty, where the role of the Soviet Union was imagined as one of guardian and protector. *Державность* was conceptualized as a way to both mobilize forces against an external menace from the West and to act as a stronghold against internal ideological enemies. Narratives of a “double besieged fortress” (Kantor 2002) reinforced the concept of a strong central power.

In order to ideologically support the imperial practices of adding or protecting new, culturally-diverse territories, this power expansion had to be combined with the theorisation of the cultural integrity of the territory. Therefore the concepts of *народность* and *православие* were incorporated in the formula.

Православие (Orthodoxy) played a very important part in the social and cultural life of Russia through the centuries. “For Medieval Russians their conversion to Christianity (988-9) was the central event of their state history, their ticket to entry both divine grace and true nationhood. By taking on the ideological heritage of Constantinople and the bastion against Tatars, Russia became the self-conscious champion of Orthodoxy. Soon the resonant (but by no means transparent) term “Holy Russia” would come into use....(Milner-Gulland, 1997:83)”. More than 1000 years of the domination of this belief determined to some extent Russian culture; *православие* represented an “antidote” to the intense borrowing and sometimes dramatic turns in the cultural politics of the new Empire. Religious continuity (apart from the Great Schism period) provided people with the comfort of stable social identity: “The questions of faith – religious, political or any other – have not been

treated as matters of simply private and personal choice in Russia” (Milner-Gulland, 1997: 83).

Православие was an important social institution in Russia, but foremost was a cultural phenomenon, tightly connected with the peasant way of life, values, customs, folk traditions and work calendar of the rural majority of the population, which were intercepted by religious meanings and coordinates³³. In this sense cultural identity in a way has strengthened the religious one. Self-identification as an Orthodox was one of the earliest identities of people in Russia, resulting in the drawing of us/them boundaries. Dostoevskii’s maxim ‘He who is not Orthodox can’t be Russian’ signifies an almost definitional link between religious and national identity in the Russian intellectual tradition.

Contemporary national identity discourse demonstrates some inheritance in the domain of faith. Referring to contemporary Eastern European narratives of national identity discourses, Schopflin argues that the persistence of certain myths of nationhood are “ultimately related to the Christian themes of rebirth and the second coming” along with “myths of election”, which are connected to the ideas of a special destiny and inner superiority (Schopflin 1996:19-22). Although Christianity as an ideology was banned in the Soviet Union, the new Soviet consciousness demanded from everybody faith in ideals (*вера в идеалы*), non-rational love, learning ideological texts by heart and argumentation “by quotations”. According to Kon, it was “the monistic world view endemic to Soviet Marxism *one party, one truth, one leader* [which] bred a rigid authoritarian personality impervious to doubt and militated against the cognitive complexity and intellectual tolerance” (Kon 1996:193). Toltz notes that the ascetics of Orthodoxy found their logical development in the ascetics of communist social initiatives: “It provoked similar archetypical reactions, which found support in a live element of the Russian life - its eschatological pathos.” (Toltz, 1998:10). When Orthodox symbols were not allowed, pre-Christian rituals were propagandized (e.g. Maslenitsa, khorovod):

³³ Anthropologists (Turner 1977, Gell 1992) note that traditional archaic people create a mythological cosmological perspective with multiple rebirth/renewal and cyclical renovations, instead of an anthropomorphic one that puts a human in the centre of the living world and gives a historic frame for events.

“Russian pre-Christian belief is by no means antiquarian matter, in so far as a vast substratum of folk beliefs and associated habits of mind, finding their reflection in much Russian literature and thought, is not wholly extinct even in the second half of the twentieth century” (Milner-Gulland 1999:83).

Under the official formula there was no space for secular intellectual creativity. Kelly notes an exceptional influence of Orthodoxy on the Russian culture and argues that even spiritual disputes amongst intellectuals, ignored by the official church, were embedded in the same tradition: “Russia like most other European countries, has been shaped by the pervasive influence of Christianity (a sturdy anti-clerical and secular intellectual tradition during the last two centuries notwithstanding)” (Kelly 1998:3). When counter-discourses of national identity emerged in the 19th century, such an intellectual search still referred (even negatively) to the official identity formula. The polemics were embedded in orthodox spiritual traditions: when Russian philosophers wrote extensively about the Russian national identity, they discussed it in terms of religious (Christian) affiliations and/or values. They conceptualised Russian cultural identity as a religious one and propagated its spirituality (*духовный поиск*) and ascetics³⁴. The contemporary role of religious philosophy in defining the “Russian idea” is highlighted in the research of Billington. He points out that the ideas of religious philosophers are constantly earning the appreciation of contemporary “young Russians” (Billington 2004:165). The scholar lists as examples “Berdiaev’s version of Emmanuel Mounier’s Christian personalism; Frank’s belief that *sobornost* begins with spiritual transformation within individuals rather than material changes in society” (ibid).

There is also another aspect of religious identification connected to the role of church and services in the society. During the lifetime of the USSR the influence of Orthodoxy was not only a theological one. Although only a minority were socialised

³⁴ For example, referring to the questions of the national identity of emigrants in the early 20th century, Russian philosopher Berdiaev left aside questions of political vengeance and ideological hatred when he wrote: “The Russian people have been torn away by force from the good life, they have been freed from the enslavement to material objects, and by the will of God they pass through a severe school of asceticism... But it is a relief for them, the possibility to return to a spiritual life, to the inner man, to get down to the depths, to love the other world more so, than this world” (Berdiaev 1925:3-8).

in religion, church influence during the Soviet era should not be seen as being confined to some formal indicators of practicing religion. Despite some criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church for its “servile attitude toward the state power” (Paramonov 1996:30), in the atmosphere of public discontent of both the Soviet past and transformations towards capitalism, the Russian Orthodox Church emerged as the only social institution that had no involvement in either the establishment of the Soviet regime or the mistakes and failures of perestroika. Orthodoxy was again considered as a cultural characteristic. Dinello (1994:198) concluded that “the fact that several generations of the Soviet people were not socialized into religion is compensated by the emphasis upon secular cultural criteria of national identity [...]. Cultural criteria of the Russian national identity prevail over purely religious criteria. Self-identification as a Russian Orthodox is not always supported by self-perception as a religious person.”

2.3.e. *Народность* - ever changing meaning. *Народность* and territory

The ideas of *народность* emerged as yet another stabilizing cultural factor for the ever-growing territory of the Russian Empire. Discussing the notion, Perrie calls it “the most elusive in the Russian language”, where “meanings and possible translations range from nationalism, nationality, nationhood, and national identity, through folkways, folksiness, and folklorism, to populism, popularity, accessibility, and comprehensibility” (Perrie, 1998:28).

Народность summarises the cultural dispositions (2.3.a) and the practices both produced by and re-producing the habitus of Russian culture. The meaning of *народность* reflects the changing nature of habitus, and these changes can be traced through the years of the implementation of Uvarov’s formula and later the Soviet “trinity”. It is relevant to the public discourse in post-Soviet Russia. The concept has inculcated, having been referred to and argued over by various national identity counter-discourses emerging during the last two centuries in Russia/Soviet Union.

At the beginning of the theorization of Russian national identity, *община* was a powerful state institution in the country and organised village life. But at the same

time it was an authentic peasant institution and one of the main forms of peasant identity (Gooding, 1996). According to the hierarchy of patriarchal power, “father in the household-starosta-tsar-God” was an arrangement of the ideology: “The view of a peasant as a child, and the peasant’s view of the Tsar as paternal figure, *batiushka*, confirms this sense of a person who has not developed into a responsible adult personality” (Offord, 1998:15). The dilemma between collective values and individual goals or responsibilities, between collective and individual consciousness, generally considered one of the dichotomies in Russian identity, is rooted in the way of life of peasant *община*.

Народность has encapsulated the ideas of traditionalism of peasants’ life. Maureen Perrie writes “Once the patriarchal village, where lord and peasant lived together in harmony, had been identified as the true fount of national life and strength, it was only a short step to the depiction of the peasants themselves as embodiments of traditional national virtues”, one of the popular ideas of the Russian national discourse being “that rural people lived closer to nature, and hence to God”, and are therefore “more human, and more profound in the capacity for feeling” (Perrie, 1998:29). In the identity discourse, the concept of *народность* symbolized “pure and innocent” peasant life organically producing characteristics of “simple soul and generous heart” and preserving a certain “roughness of manner” and “avoidance of luxury” (Rogger, 1960:126) that was connected with the archaic consciousness of the Russian peasantry.

The priority of collective interests over those of the individual, combined with principles of equality in distribution and personal income, were genetically connected with the understandings of peasant collectivism. When at the end of the 19th century *община* had already begun to dissolve as a social structure and a community type, *народность* symbolised neighbourhood help, communications, a common way of life and entertainment. The ideas of *народность* were more often seen in concepts of “serving society” (*нужность*) and solidarity with the country/empire at large. Under the Soviet rule ideas of *народность* became prescriptive and obligatory. Kantor believes that Soviet national identity was based

on the same non-differentiated, non-individualised concept: “the essence was the same: *a communal-public basis* as distinct from the individualism of the West.” (Kantor 2002:1).

A special mission of *народность* was supported by the narratives of immense commonwealth and state power, which in turn were based on huge territory. Cultural integrity in the Russian cultural discourse was categorized in terms of imperial geography.

Even alternative concepts of Russian national identity focused on questions of identity in terms of integrity of a culture and a land, imagining Russia either to be a part of the West or of the East. The culture was perceived as spread (as a text, using Schopflin’s metaphor) over a certain territory. For example, according to Tolz, Eurasianists “attempted to show that Russia’s territorial expansion was the product of geographical inevitability and security considerations rather than of economic aspirations” (Tolz 1998:270). Eurasianists believed that the homogenising mutual influences of people of various cultural origins, mainly non-Slavic, who for a long period of time lived in close proximity and under the same authority, created “*mnogonatsionalnaia natsia*” of the whole of Russia. Danilevskii and Lamanskii identified “the geographical space of the empire with the cultural-historical space of the Russian-nation” (Bassin 1991:12). Laruelle defines Eurasianism as a “geographical ideology” that confirms the organic existence of Russia as an Empire. She highlights that, in a historic perspective, “Russian identity and history were based on the meaning of its territory and the philosophy of this space” (Laruelle 2004:105).³⁵

A Soviet ideological construct of a multiethnic nation (“*mnogonatsionalnaia natsia*”) had a great deal in common with Eurasianism. As a new historical identity, the Soviet person has been claimed to be the creation of an ideology and prescribed way of life while ethnic and cultural differences were subordinated by a new sense of commonality.

³⁵ On Eurasianism and its influences on contemporary Russian national identity discourse see Tolz 1998, Billington 2004, Laruelle 2004.

2.3.f. Ethnic selves?

The similarity of the official concepts of Russian national identity cannot be restricted to the issues they highlight, but is also expressed in Foucauldian silences or absences³⁶. Ethnic selves represent the biggest lacuna in the identity discourse of the last two centuries. Russian national identity in the nineteenth-twentieth centuries was conceptualised as a cultural and historical unity with references to a certain territory. This approach ignored rather than resolved the ethnic identities of the population.

The politics of Russian national identity emerged as an imperial force, stressing the roles of state, land and spirituality/ideology as well as the values of traditionalism. But ethnic identities were ignored: in the Russian Empire there were hundreds of ethnic groups (*narodnosti*) living within the territory. Some of them were categorized as “*inovertsy*”, people of another faith (e.g. Polish Catholics, Muslim Tatars), without distinguishing between their religions or acknowledging differences between them³⁷. At the same time, ethnic features of the *narodnosti* of the same faith were played down or subordinated. For example, ethnic Russianness was not a clearly defined notion in itself. According to the 1897 census the category ‘Russians’ comprised Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians³⁸ (see for example, Rowney and Stockwell 1978)

Explanations for this ideology vary. Week opines that Russian autocracy was incapable of categorising ethnic differences (on political and governmental inadequacy on ethnic issues see Week, 1996). Others also highlight the autocratic attempts to obscure ethnic differences in order to introduce and support loyalties to the Empire: any idea of poly-ethnic Russia would undermine the national identity of

³⁶ According to Foucault, an absence of discussions about/ recognition of existence of a phenomenon signifies a zone of unresolved social questions (see 3.4.a). According to Bourdieu, censored narratives represent a mode of power domination (see 2.2.a.)

³⁷ The division between *inovertsy* and other groups represents yet another argument for the binary character of judgments being a feature of the habitus in Russia. The binary strategy of othering was protected by government policies: intellectuals within ethnic minorities who attempted to reflect upon ethnic self-consciousness were classified as political dissidents (‘*neblagonadezhnye*’).

³⁸ Hosking argues that the Russian Empire was built “at the cost of Russia’s own sense of nationhood” (Hosking 1998:57).

Russia as orthodox, autocratic and culturally homogenic, and it had to be hidden. For example, Riasanovskii wrote that the government successfully introduced the politics of a “state-subject” axis in its rule of the Empire as an attempt to “expand its social base, to rely directly on the “people” in the broad sense of the word” (Riasanovskii, 1959:411). Perrie describes the Russian national politics of the time as being based on measures of “social inclusion and assimilation rather than racial exclusion” (Perrie, 1998:34), but notes the “clumsy way” in which attempts to create a nation of *россияне*, united by cultural bonds and common language, had been realized.

Other research looks at the consistent policy of Russification applied by the Empire’s government on its subjects in the 19th century (for overview see Dowler 2001). The autocratic practices of Russification intensified after the Polish uprising of 1863 and were subsequently introduced in Finland and the Baltic provinces. They were accompanied by the discrimination against the Jews that had existed from the 18th century (e.g. Klier, 1995) and by the emergence of Russian chauvinistic organizations. On the positive side, Russian ethnic nationalism was celebrated in architecture, music, the arts, literature and even in household items created at the time (Barlett and Edmondson, 1998). Public interest in folklore and naïve or traditional forms of art and national history was expressed through literature, opera, ballet, drama, art and sculpture.

Cultural virtues, orthodox values and traditional heritage had always been an important issue in the intellectual discourse of the 19th-early 20th century and became important to the discussion of what Russian national identity is in the beginning of the 21st century.

2.3.g. Current Russian Identity politics – crisis and continuity

The contemporary crisis of national identity in Russia has been widely discussed (Peterson 2001, Kuzio 2002, Kon 1996, Billington and Parthe 2003, Billington 2004). It is conditioned by the rapid political and economic changes in the country

and by the demise of the USSR. The Russian national identity formed under the conditions of imperial statehood is adapting to the new geo-political situation.

First of all, the Russian national identity discourse is structured through imagining the Other rather than defining the features of Self (collective post-Soviet identity). In the late 1990's a research group made up of James Billington and Kathleen Parthe studied the prospects for a post-Soviet identity by running seminars with prominent politicians and thinkers from Russia. During these debates the dominant concept was of continuity (*непрерывность* -sic), with politicians believing in the "restoration of identity" (in terms of a re-incarnation of pre-Soviet identities as imagined by these politicians: "Russia can link up with its traditions, with the logic of its development; with its history...This is the path to restore our identity" (Billington and Parthe 2003:62-63). Thus the Russian prominent personalities discussing the Other tried to distance post-Soviet identity from the Soviet legacy.

The second Other identified by Billington on the basis of these meetings was the West. For example, it was stated by the Russian politicians that, compared to the "West", "we [Russians] have a somewhat different set of values, we live a bit differently" (*ibid*).

The respondents were aware of the inconsistency of attempts to overcome the identity crisis and named them a "mixed-salad alternative" (*путь винегрета*) (*ibid*). Inconsistency was especially noted in the domain of symbols (Lenin's Mausoleum and the official re-burial of Nicolas II, the restoration of imperial orders and the celebration of the Young Communist League day). Such contradictions within the range of official symbols only serve to reflect on the ongoing identity search.

The alleged continuity (*непрерывность*) is challenged by new realities of post-Soviet (post-imperial) Russia, with its self-awareness of ethnic identities yet to be conceptualized. Billington's extensive research shows that in distancing itself from the Soviet identity and the past, the post-Soviet national identity discourse still keeps its traditionally ambiguous attitude to the West. But for the first time in the Russian

history the question of Othering is not straightforwardly Russia vs. the West. Billington accentuates that Russia is facing and attempting to reflect on the otherness inside itself (2004:135-152).

To summarise, the above examination of the Russian national identity discourse in historic perspective (2.3.d, 2.3.e, 2.3.f, 2.3.g.) was aimed to demonstrate how cultural dispositions, as well as economic and demographic imperatives have been essentialised to become the principles of national identity construction in Russia.

The post-Soviet identity discourse shows continuity in terms of cultural dispositions³⁹ and some practices related to the relatively recent “world superpower” (imperial) status, as well as to historic and geographical features.

2.4. RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND MIGRATION

2.4.a. Reasons: pragmatism vs. tragedy

The problem of migrants' identity in Russian culture was defined by two major discourses: one is on migration as a value-loaded decision to leave the Motherland; the other is formed by the cultural legacy left by different waves of migrants, highlighting the special role of Russian culture⁴⁰. Both discourses will be discussed here.

The decision to emigrate has always been received ambiguously in Russian society. In the light of the very close, almost physical attitude to the native land (motherly image, see 2.3.a), forced migrations have been excused and surrounded by poetic associations, but any act of pragmatic emigration has been perceived as treachery. On the one hand, migration highlighted the role of *volia* as a cultural value, but at the same time such a decision, made individually and in pursuit of personal goals, signified that a person was not accepting their own *dolia*, their share of common

³⁹ As Billington writes, “core values of ordinary people” that can be understood through folk traditions “neglected regional perspectives and great ethnographic diversity” (2004:152). The scholar believes that “the [Russian] culture increasingly defines itself from the bottom up and the periphery in” (*ibid*).

⁴⁰ See this dissertation 1.2.b, 1.2.c. and 1.2.d for discussion of different waves of migration in and from Russia. Typology of diasporic bonding and role of culture in the diaspora is discussed in 1.5.c and 1.5.d.

destiny.⁴¹ The act of migration at the level of cultural dispositions has been approved only where it has been absolutely necessary to avoid a life-threatening danger; it has not been welcomed where it is calculated as bringing benefits.

An ambiguity of interpretation of displacement is traceable in contemporary academic literature on migration in Russia. For example, Nazarov theorises that Russian migration after the revolution was a “spiritual [духовный], rather than political phenomenon” (Nazarov 2001:225) and highlights migrants’ “ethical responsibilities” for “leaving the Fatherland in such a difficult time” and their “sacrifice for Russianism” (*подвиг русскости*) (*ibid*). The post-revolutionary wave of emigration is often described in the most romantic terms, often in comparison with a description of globalised migration. For example, Iontsev compares post-revolutionary migrants with The Wandering Jew (Ahasuerus), while he defines the economic migration of later periods as “колбасная” emigration (Iontsev 2001:340). Lebedeva believes that post-revolutionary emigration was “the best Russia has ever grown”, and “Russia shall not forget it” (Lebedeva 2001:109).

The romantic vision of migration in the Russian identity discourse is connected to the tradition of displacement in search of intellectual and/or political freedom. As was discussed in the chapter on migration (1.2.b, 1.2.c, 1.2.d., and 1.5.c, 1.5.d), the history of the Russian diaspora comprises the individual emigration of political and religious dissidents and of free-minded individuals, as well as the exterritorial political activity during the period of the Russian Empire, and the forced political emigration in the Soviet period. Migrants’ aspirations for freedom, education or the creative atmosphere in Europe are ultimately celebrated with the achievements of political or intellectual migrants incorporated into the Russian cultural legacy.

⁴¹ The trope of journey (migration can also be perceived as such) in Russian culture is researched by Sandomirskaia (2001). She investigates the archaeology of the concept of “Rodina” (native land) and highlights the culturally prescribed circle-shaped trajectory of travel (symbolizing the utopian return to the lost native land). Sarsenov (2006) further develops this idea, highlighting negative narratives about the traitor and the exile depicting migration as a sin.

These perceptions have an impact on the self-ascribed identity of migrants, and their image in the “mainland” discourse is still contradictory. Studying psychological aspects of Russian emigration, Lebedeva attempts to generalize migration in the context of conflict between an individual and a society, and asks why forced migrants who have “tragically left Russia” believe “that the only decent reason for emigration is mortal danger” and why they “despise” those “who have left the country for other reasons” (Lebedeva 2001:105, translation is mine). In her article, written 10 years after the citizens of the Russian Federation had been granted permission to travel and migrate, she still argues with the perception of “emigration as treachery”, and calls for emigration to be reassessed as a human right and a natural event in life. At the same time she is surprised why Russian migrants do not want to “honestly accept” that their displacements at the end of the 20th century were economically motivated (*ibid*, 143), thus excluding other reasons for contemporary migration (for example, pursuit of knowledge and career, health reasons, family circumstances, the growth of ethnic tensions in some areas, the danger of terrorism).

2.4.b. Cultural legacy of Russia Abroad

Intellectual and political emigrations, as well as forced migration, are seen as an embodiment of the protest against bureaucratic or authoritarian policies in the Motherland, and their “burning desires”⁴² (Naficy 1993:16) remained with their native land. Raeff believed that the dedication of Russian migrants to the continuity of native culture represented “an essential aspect of their national identity, of their identity as educated, at whatever level, Russian people” (Raeff 1990:10). Such migrants have stayed tightly connected (intellectually, if not directly) with Russia and their native culture. They have nurtured their memories through nostalgia, recreating the image of the homeland in the vein of the traditional diasporic discourse of “return to the lost homeland”.

These sentiments have resulted in the recreation of the “mythical homeland”, called “restorative nostalgia” by Boym (Boym 2001: 41-48). Various pieces of scholarly research stress that migrants cultivate these connections, defining them in terms of

⁴² Naficy famously used this expression to describe migrants’ feelings to the native land.

their mission on Earth (see for example Suomela 2004, Pushkareva 1997). Greta Slobin believes that the identity discourse of migrants, as well as their cultural activities, includes “conscious isolation from the host country in the effort to preserve cultural identity and continuity” (Slobin 2001: 521). This well researched phenomenon was called *Russia Abroad*.⁴³ Thus the Russian diaspora emerges in the national identity discourse as a separate exterritorial entity, an embodiment of Russian culture in the western world.

The cultural legacy of forced migration not only presupposes migrants’ affiliations to Russia, but prescribes a special attitude to their host countries. In the Russian national identity discourse, migrants were both praised and at the same time pitied for their inability to integrate into the new society. The discourse is interspersed by narratives connected to the uncomfortable, depressed situation of migrants in the West (e.g. Struve 1996, Shklovskii 2001) and the lack of intentions to assimilate (see e.g. Suomela 2004), which were also interpreted as signs of fidelity to the native land. The conflict between the realities of host countries and the image of Europe in the Russian identity discourse was probably predefined by the identity dilemmas of Russia and the West, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Time and geography were re-imagined in the diaspora⁴⁴. Slobin elaborates that the loss of country was perceived by the post revolutionary wave of migrants as the end of historic time: “The Russian exiles acutely perceived the loss of their homeland and of the empire as an exclusion from history” (Slobin 2001: 514). The phenomenon of “retarding” time in the diaspora is widely discussed and various explanations have been offered for it. Some researchers highlight the loss of contacts and difficulty in getting information and news from Russia (e.g. Suomela 2004, Lukianova 1991) and the ideological rage which did not allow emigrants to see the new realities (Freinkman-Khrustaleva and Novikov 1995). Lebedeva provides a psychological explanation of this phenomenon as being a cultural shock: “when a life- or worldview-changing event happens, [an individual’s] personal, subjective

⁴³ This notion was invented by Riasanovskii (1959) and used as the title of Raeff’s book about Russian emigration (1990). See also 1.5.d. in this thesis.

⁴⁴ See also 4.2.b., 4.2.c and 4.4.c.1.

time stops” (Lebedeva 2001:130). Isolation from the host country and the native land created a situation when migrants lost touch with developments in the world and were deprived of the opportunity to correlate their views in discussions with the new generation (Freinkman-Khrustaleva, Novikov 1995:110). At the same time the situation of being “out of time” assisted in the creation of interesting literature and art, invested in a continuity of style and tradition (Raeff, 1990: 102-103), which were appropriated and appreciated by the mainland culture after the fall of the totalitarian regime.

The aforementioned features contribute to the creation of a special cultural legacy of Russian migration. Not only the intellectual products created through emigration but also the life-stories of émigrés are imagined as part of Russian culture. The cultural heritage of emigration embraces original pieces of art and literature, published memoirs and related life-stories, at the same time it affects the mainland culture in the Russian Empire/USSR through the power of its own image. The image of Russia Abroad and its cultural legacy forms a special cultural disposition in the Russian national discourse and the identity discourse in the contemporary diaspora.

2.4.c. Separation vs. integration

This cultural legacy emerges as repressive to the process of assimilation and adaptation of migrants. The identity discourse with regards to the Russian diaspora emerges as selective and often reduced mainly to nostalgic narratives. Referring to the analysis of emigration patterns in Russia⁴⁵, it is possible to speculate that the patterns of and motives for migration have always been diverse in different parts of the Russian Empire (for example, Ukrainians more often migrated abroad as temporary workers, while in Russia temporary labour migration was restricted to internal village-city displacements⁴⁶). A significant number (1.2.b.) of ethnically non-Russian subjects from the Russian Empire/Soviet Union successfully adapted to the new conditions of life. But their stories and achievements are rarely mentioned. In the national identity discourse the process of adaptation has been silenced or appreciated ambiguously.

⁴⁵ See 1.2.b, 1.2.c. 1.2.d

⁴⁶ Okorokov 2001. See also 1.2.b.

Migrations in the period of globalization (1.2.d and 1.5.d.) differ significantly from the forced migration of previous waves: “The paradoxical character of the Russian diaspora, and its steadfast insistence on preserving the cultural tradition of the homeland, along with the transnational connections formed while abroad, contribute to the complexity of its reception [...]. Moreover, Russia in the 1990’s bears little resemblance either to the country the émigrés remembered or to the Soviet Union as they knew it (Slobin 2001: 521)”. The issues of individual success in the new society, successful appropriation of new standards and integration into the host society became of high importance. The existence of virtual diasporas proves that people can successfully belong to several places at once. Contacts with the native culture are unrestricted and simultaneous. But the aforementioned realities interplay with a certain canon of emigration, based on the cultural heritage created by generations of migrants (together with their nostalgia, memory, unhappiness, high artistic achievements). This combination impacts the Russian national identity discourse in mainland Russia and in the diaspora, influences their diasporic practices and perceptions.

2.5. INTERNET AS “IDENTITY WORKSHOP”

As it has been discussed earlier (2.1.and 2.2.), identities are dynamic phenomena, discursively constructed, defined by the cultural context of interactions, by the language of communication and by the culture within which individuals are socialised. A meaning emerges through the process of interconnection which is influenced by the language of communication.

The medium of communication also influences the process of creation and recreation of meanings (McLuhan 1964). This chapter is concerned with how the selves in Computer Mediated Communications (CMC) differ from the off-line, so-called “real”, identities. The representation of self in mediated communication (and in the web-forums in particular) is defined by the special conditions of communications on-line, namely the disembodied nature of the Internet, the intertextual and interactive character of communication and the borderless transterritorial possibilities for

dissemination of information and production of meanings. The creation of virtual national communities will be discussed in connection with national identities on-line.

2.5.a. Disembodied nature of Internet and “authenticity” of identities

The disembodied nature of the Internet (Kirshenblatt-Gimbertt, 1996:23) refers to a special characteristic of the medium when an exchange of messages occurs without reference to physical identity, which in turn highlights the questions of authenticity of personal identities in Internet-based communications. How do the “real” identities of contributors correlate with their virtual ones? Does the lack of interpersonal cues in this medium mean that the individual is less bound by social norms and constraints? Are social features represented at all and, if so, what characteristics symbolise them on-line? Does it mean that in comparison to face-to-face interconnections, CMC liberate an individual from an identity which is restrained by realities such as class, age, income and location? How do these differences influence in-group solidarities and community formation?

Scholars have observed that the disembodied nature of the Internet allows for the possibility of creating alternative realities with false identities and fairy-tale personal circumstances: “You can be whoever you want to be. You can completely redefine yourself if you want” (Turkle 1995:84). Although the technology of the Internet allows visual interactions, communications in web-forums mainly occur verbally under conditions of anonymity and without definite references to the physical features of participants and their location, encouraging speculation about falsification of personality.

The concept of “limited cues” was a dominant idea of CMC studies in the late 1980s (Kiesler *et al* 1984). CMC were perceived as mass media with a low level of so called “social presence” (Short *et al* 1976). In the 1990s it was found that the domain of intentionally false on-line identities was exaggerated. Identities on-line have been found to be reflective of off-line identities, and modern literature on false identities among the users of the Internet concentrates on the purpose and meaning of virtual hide-and-seek games: flirting, attempting commercial malpractices and analyzing

personal psychological problems. It was noted that, even in such cases, people tend to misrepresent their circumstances rather than their identities.

Visual anonymity is still a key condition influencing CMC, but it is perceived as an empowering rather than a deceiving feature. Although the medium provides an endless choice of on-line roles, communication via computers assists individuals in their real-life tasks and reflects on their real-life personalities. Bruckman (1992) stresses that the purpose of such a “game” is to articulate a self-search of an individual. She calls a play with an image of self (gender, age, location, and ethnicity) an “identity workshop”. In the same vein Turkle approaches the question of imagining identities on-line from both the psychological and sociological perspectives; she notes that virtual identity is often used to help people “navigate” their lives. Turkle describes a case study of Ava, a graduate student who lost a leg in a car accident. Ava created a one-legged character online which helped her to become more comfortable with her real body. Turkle quoted Ava’s conclusion: “Virtuality needs not to be a prison. It can be the raft, the ladder, the transitional space, the moratorium, that is discarded after reaching greater freedom. We don’t have to reject life on-screen, but we don’t have to treat it as an alternative life either” (Turkle 1995:236). Turkle discusses on-line identities as instrumental to off-line ones. People use on-line versions of their identities in order to predict the results of non-virtual changes they are going through, to discuss new experiences and facilitate new meaning construction.

The model of on-line identities elaborated by Spears and Lea (1992) is based on the above findings and represents an alternative view to the limited cues model. First of all, they pointed out that communications via the Internet are not completely opaque in terms of real physical personality. Personal identities, which in the case of face-to-face communications are perceived through visual markers, are derived on-line from textual self-references and social markers in the messages. Subjects’ ability to express him/her, types of associations, knowledge of geographical or occupational realities, and command of language/s etc. signifies essential personal features and serves as contextual cues. The assumptions people make can be correct or wrong,

off-line just as on-line. For example, Lysloff describes a case of a moderator of a pop-music web-site barring certain expressions considered offensive to Afro-Americans. When this bar was posted to a participant called Logikz, the latter noted that the offending word was a sign of affectation and that he himself was Afro-American. Rather than being opaque and completely anonymous, on-line interactions follow a reverse pattern compared to traditional acquaintance: one discovers on-line details of somebody's education, political beliefs and occupation, and on this basis makes assumptions about his/her gender, ethnicity and age, while in an off-line acquaintance, personal values and perspectives are allocated on the basis of visual stereotypes inscribed through body or name. In this sense personal identities on the Internet always reflect reality, but the process of the personal features recognition is structured differently from the same process during off-line communications (Smith and Kollock 1999).

Secondly, studying correlations between on-line and off-line personal identities, researchers highlight that personal self-representation and behaviour on-line are connected to the type of CMC. On-line communication has a definite address in "cyberspace"; it is always located within a specific virtual place, which defines how identities will be presented. For example, researchers distinguish between "role playing forums"⁴⁷ and on-line discussion clubs or forums, the latter being connected to participants' real lives, with people looking to establish connections and solve problems in their real life situations (Portes 1997, Turkle 1996). Studying the latter, Kendall (1999:68) points out that people are not playing roles and that they expect that others will represent themselves as in off-line communications: "Although they [the participants] compare [forum] with a bar or a pub, they do so to explain a style of interaction that pre-exists the analogy, rather than to set up a theme to which they will conform their on-line behaviour...This stance toward on-line interaction emphasises identity continuity and interpersonal responsibility, and contrasts with representations by participants and researchers who emphasise the flexibility of identity in on-line behaviour".

⁴⁷ Excluded from the experiment.

Self-representation during CMC correlates with the type of virtual place and/or topic of communication.⁴⁸ Participants in CMC choose a certain level of openness or readiness for disclosing personal details depending on them. The style of self-representation coheres with the form and subject of the mediated communications, and thus to the motives for engaging in the interaction. For example, personal web-pages provide a visitor with digital photos, details of personal life, interests or career. Forums often provide a visitor with participants' profiles or a link to their personal web-pages; at the same time special electronic options allow participants to use nicknames and icons of real or symbolic images to represent themselves.

In the case of off-line as well as virtual communication, individuals are concerned with image making and the interpretation of their personal circumstances. As in off-line communications, topics of discussion specify some identities and shadow others (e.g. music lovers do not discuss family responsibilities, travel forums do not go into professional identities but stress hobbies, cultural affiliations and sometimes demonstrate the financial status of participants).

Recent literature shows that connections between virtual and real on the Internet are deeper than was believed earlier. "Real" (lived experiences) can be seen as interfering with the simulated/mediated environment which prescribes our behaviour. Miller and Slater, in their 10-year study of the Internet and its users in Trinidad, showed that CMC "are more real than virtual" (2000:30). They found that Trinidadian families dispersed across the globe treated Internet as an established day-to-day device for facilitating interactions over distances. Subjects treated the Internet, e-mail and e-commerce as if it were the traditional mail or telephone. Male respondents said they would chat to another man if they were only searching for some specific information and would make acquaintance with women on-line for flirtation. Young people use computer assisted communications to flirt and organise dates. Trinidadian women were more often than not chatting with people from

⁴⁸ The social construction of virtual space encompasses the whole spectrum of personal interconnections (e.g. friendship, romance, professional interests) and at the same time includes many variants of human behaviour: public information and debates, cultural production and advertisements, calls for political actions, underground bonding for illegal activities, even virtual analogies of crimes (stalking and rape for example).

different countries, sharing and discussing personal issues. Some of them were planning visits to their on-line friends. Both male and female respondents spoke about trust being gradually built up (despite the anonymity) through a continued on-line presence over time. Miller and Slater used this evidence to reject the idea of purely virtual friends and the concept of dislocated or fragmented identities in virtual space: “We need to treat Internet media as continuous with and embedded in other social spaces” (Miller and Slater, 2000:5).

To summarize, identities in CMC are neither real nor false, but reflect on reality. During the act of communication, the medium provides the user with a choice of how and to what extent to disclose their personalities and demonstrate their complex and individual understanding of their self. Modern scholarship also concludes that virtual relationships are more real than was expected, that they develop according to real-life patterns, modifying over time to a higher degree of openness and leading to off-line meetings. The Internet is shown both as a place where social interactions occur and also as a means of interaction with geographically distant locations.

2.5.b. Dilemmas of self-representation on-line

Identity dilemmas in the definition of self are exposed by the problem of how to assess the extent to which “reality” measurements are important in CMC. What part of individual identity is self-representation? Do simulated as well as lived experiences form one’s personality?

Scholars underline the importance of mediated experiences in contemporary identity.⁴⁹ In order to access the question of how fully forum personalities represent “real selves”, works on identity self-representation through other media must be considered, for example the view that any representation of self is created under the condition that a person is being witnessed and “a free-standing observer/ teller figure cannot be extrapolated from it” (Eakin 2004:129). Eakin applies a developmental psychological frame of reference in his study of autobiographical texts and highlights the discursive character of any self-representation: “our sense of identity is itself

⁴⁹ See also this dissertation 2.2.c.

generated as and in a narrative dimension of consciousness” (*ibid*). Generic ties between “imagined” and “real” in self-representation form part of Lysoff’s argument based on ideas of relatedness and discursive construction of contemporary identity: “If representation exists in the absence of the “real thing”, then it is representation or simulation, that constitutes the stuff of culture....In other words, an increasing amount of our day-to-day experiences are mediated rather than live” (Lysloff 2003:236). Practices of imagining are becoming increasingly important in post-modernity and change the perception of what is considered “real”⁵⁰. Turkle (*ibid*) argues that narratives and imagined rather than physical connections have become a growing domain of “real” identities and notes that “we are moving from a modernist culture of calculation into a post-modernist culture of simulation”.

It was discussed in this chapter (2.1. and 2.2.) how narratives of self are solicited from and legitimised by society/community in order to be considered eligible, and thus the link between self and narrative in the process of communication is so intimate that “to speak of the one is reciprocally to speak of the other” (Eakin 2004:129). Communication on-line (and through web-forums in particular) promotes ritualisation in an anthropological sense. Rituals symbolically produce the situation of (on-line) “fraternity” where participants reject social status differences (Turner 1977, Geertz 1973, Ries 1997). Participants replay (and sometimes inverse) various communication scenarios and by doing so highlight structures of their native culture. Such ritualisation is temporal (Reis 1997, Maerhoff 1975), but allows generalisations about communities (i.e. digital diasporas) on the bases of the narratives formed during the communication.

There are also evidences that participation in on-line communication tends to strengthen group solidarities. Spears and Lea found that the reduced visual cues in CMC lead to a growth rather than a loss of self-awareness and self-reference. Interpersonal knowledge and understanding is considered central in CMC, where participants perceive themselves as “social and material actors” (Yates 2001). According to Lea, the anonymity of CMC leads surprisingly to a heightening of

⁵⁰ See also this dissertation 2.1.a, 2.1.b, 2.1.c.

participants' identification with the group by increasing their concern over how they are evaluated by others. In other words, anonymity and disembodiment of communication are likely to increase self-stereotyping and the stereotyping of others in terms of the attributes of the interacting group, leading to in-group solidarities influencing self-representation on-line to a greater degree than collective identities define personal self-representation in off-line communications. This narrativisation of self-representation in order to conform to the values of the group (the Russian diaspora in the case of this study) highlights the importance of research into on-line social relationships and forms of grouping.

Jones (1995) drew attention to the fact that social (power) relationships on-line are not identical to off-line contacts. Through the computer as a mediator for communication (producing and establishing emotional connections, information exchanges and symbolic bonding) the social hierarchy of communication is rearranged. Research into this subject requires first of all an understanding of the establishment of social relationships in off-line communities. Although virtual communications embed real social practices, the mode of perception of *others* is drawn by different social markers within the virtual society: education (logic of arguments, quotations, general knowledge) rather than money becomes an instrument of power; allusions or jokes rather than appearance signify sexual appeal; authority is separated from social status, but is dependant on how well one's nickname or image is known etc (see Jones 1995). Using diverse quantitative methods, Yates (2001) compares computer assisted conferencing, telephone conversations and on-line verbal communications and comes to the conclusion that CMC are less concerned with social power hierarchy and time limitations than other types of communication. He also notes that participants of CMC tend to concentrate on the subject of the messaging (so-called "task focus") rather than participants' personal features and identities, with self-references in on-line communications being "direct, positive and concerned with location" (2001:126). As Kendall (1999) finds out, people on-line seek an essentialised grounding for their identities: they perceive time linearly, value embodied experiences over virtual ones and extend on-line relationships through other media. These findings correlate with the "mundane" description of on-line self-

representation given by Miller and Slater (2000). An in-depth study of interconnections between on-line and off-line communities provides a challenging opportunity to conceptualise the transformation of the virtual world into a tangible one.

The computer, as with any other medium, imposes technological limits on the construction of identities on-line. CMC users invest more time and effort in presenting aspects of their identity because of communication in written form. As a result, on-line identity is limited by the ability of the communicator to provide coherent textual messages (Herring 2001). Studying Usenet groups, Baym found that, in order to articulate a collective symbolic system, participants of virtual communities “develop forms of expression which enable them to communicate social information and to create and codify group specific meanings” (Baym 1995:161). The verbality of on-line communications imposes several linguistic challenges, including understanding of the metaphoric language specific to computer surfers as well as the language of the communication.⁵¹

This specific language of group meaning empowers community construction (and migrants’ community in particular) through one’s cultural ideals, archetypical forms and dreams of “good” and perfection: “The marrying of virtual and real worlds creates a rich interaction that interweaves the images and agencies in the real world with those of the imagination and cyberspace. In mythological terms it blends things that myth says were created by the gods with things created by people” (Stefic, 1997: 263). Participants reinvent their ethnicity⁵² and re-imagine their social hierarchy to fit

⁵¹ The process of the construction of meaning on-line differs from the symbolic search in an offline community, not only due to the disembodied character of the interactions, but because these interactions are placed in a virtual surrounding. CMC create an environment with imagined textual “landscapes” without real-life dangers, efforts and inequalities. It is widely accepted that the virtual world is imagined through metaphors. Place, time, conversation and emotions, when transferred into a bodiless and mainly textual environment, lose their “real” tangible forms. One cannot be hurt on the computer highway, one doesn’t need to go out to visit a web-site, one cannot smell dust in an electronic library. Nobody needs to dress up to engage in conversation. Participants of web-communities, created in such a metaphoric world, feel more powerful and liberated than in the real world.

⁵² See this dissertation 2.5.d. and 2.2.e

the realities of new localities, their mythical home, and their ritualised communication on-line.

Due to the verballity of communication in Forums, language as a symbolic system of national values, encapsulating national history and heritage, plays a special role in self-representation on-line under conditions of limited social markers. Although expressions of national self on the Internet in connection with other personal identities are not yet fully researched, some experiments have demonstrated an increased awareness of one's nationality on-line under conditions of anonymity (Lea, 1992). In many cases the language of communication in migrants' web-forums signifies the origin of the participants and thus prescribes a range of cultural identities.

2.5.c. The role of community/ audience in virtual communications

Can the exchange of virtual messages be interpreted as a significant public discourse ranking alongside other mass media? How can the role of a virtual text be measured in terms of its audience and public significance?

In any discussion on the questions of narrative in a digital context it is important to note that the boundaries between different mass media are becoming increasingly illusionary due to resource sharing across media (Deegan and Tanner 2002) and the ability of the Internet to encapsulate materials of traditional mass media and to incorporate links into messages.⁵³ A generation of active computer users is entering the decision-making age group and this fact increases the potential impact of the Internet as a news and opinion provider. In this sense the Internet plays the role of a global socially-charged mass medium due to improving access worldwide and the audience becoming more and more comprehensive. Mitra and Cohen compare the emergence of the Internet with the earlier development of television: "The late 20th century has witnessed the development and growth of the Internet much like the post-World War II era saw the growth of the television [...]"(Mitra and Cohen,

⁵³ For example, contemporary periodicals represent a combination of print and digital editions, invest in their own web portals and often moderate their own forums. Radio and television programs are also available on-line.

1999)". They note that "the WWW is a medium in which characteristics of the book and television are combined to produce a non-linear text whose meaning is the product of the synergy between the two different kinds of text" (Mitra and Cohen 1999:188).

By following certain links and ignoring the others, the reader becomes a co-author of the text and, as Jones suggests, the Internet becomes a means of delivering personalised mass media (Jones 1995, 1998). These technological options highlight the higher role of personal choice and individual values in the construction of the Internet: digital libraries and search engines provide the user with a product which can be both focused upon a specific audience group and tailor-made for an individual. The Internet empowers a reader's choice due to the nonlinear (interspersed with links) electronic texts and messages undermine authors' control of the imposed set of meanings and provide readers with wider information on the subject. Jones believes we should "reconceptualize the notion of "audience" altogether (beyond active and passive)" (Jones, 1999:187): "There has been the recognition that the audience of media is empowered to the extent that the readers may not accept the preferred meaning of the text but gain only the meaning that fits with their everyday experiences" (ibid). Any meanings created by the process of reading of texts in the web-forums, for example, have the potency to be reproduced immediately in new texts, thus encouraging new readings of a constantly growing body of messages. The communication often develops with the speed and intensity of oral communication, but, as it is saved in written form, it has the potency to influence participants to a higher degree than an oral exchange of opinions.

The Internet evokes analogies with other media (pamphlets, committees of correspondence etc.) that incubated democratic changes in the 18th century. Analogy can be found with Burke's image of a society itself: "Imagine that you enter a parlour. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the

steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defence; another aligns against you... The discussion is interminable. The hour grows late; you must depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress” (Burke Kenneth 1944/1989:110-11).

The Internet has a crucial impact on the meaning of personal freedom of speech and the public significance of the mass media: “The Internet is not only a technology but an engine of social change, one that has modified work habits, education, social relations generally, and maybe most important, our hopes and dreams”(Jones, 1999:190). Jones believes that the Internet is a social space, “a milieu, made up of, and made possible by, communication, which is basic for any community or society” (*ibid.*).

2.5.d. On-line community?

The borderlessness and bodilessness of on-line communication represent two major difficulties in conceptualising an on-line community. Can a notion of community be applied to “faceless” and “placeless” communications? Is the notion of “community” acceptable when considering the disembodied construct? Can the virtual exchange of messages form part of diasporic bonding in a diasporic public sphere?

Definitions of community vary widely across different disciplines (e.g. sociology, anthropology, political studies) and provoke discussions about a certain set of obligations, collective and individual identities and community boundaries. Since the 19th century community has been perceived as a natural grouping based on a common property or activity, usually within a neighbourhood⁵⁴, and “constituted through language, creed, land, buildings, treasures and monuments, which serve to maintain and perpetuate a commonality through heredity and education, and that art

⁵⁴ At the turn of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries, problems of community construction were discussed as part of a wider search by various philosophers for definitions of the nature of social power. In the book “Community and Society”, Tonnies (1887) analysed how the technological progress and individualism of the modern world had caused Europe to undergo an evolution from “Community”, which he understood as organic bonding, to “Society” through the creation of a rational will.

and ritual also serve to retain cultural memories, promote unity of spirit, and to cultivate a sense of the legacy of the group within itself” (Tonnies 1887 [1957]: 225).

Scholars distinguish between functional and symbolic understandings of community (Fernback, 1999). The functional perspective, according to Fernback, focuses on geographical proximity of members, while the symbolic dimension (Lysloff 2003, Cohen 1994, Greetz 1973) emphasises meanings rather than the form and structures of a community.

In addition to focusing on the local as the central concept in its definition of community, the functional perspective also encompasses the notion of interdependency in community life as well as common activities and mutual help, “based on commonality of location, interest, values, economic livelihood, behaviours, or roles” (Fernback 2002:209). The functional perspective accepts that the essence of community is making a common “home” (or “nesting”), based on organic and intuitive bonding (Tonnies, *ibid*)⁵⁵, and describes the construction of a community in terms of participants, structures, and rituals and arrangements.

Symbolic perspective holds that the essence of “nesting” is in fostering a specific set of values, coded in the form of myths and symbols, and then in re-creating (changing, expanding, re-arranging) them through common narratives, thus making the process of community construction meaningful for participants. Therefore the symbolic dimension studies communities as entities of meanings.

Any community has a symbolic or imagined perspective because in the image of the individual “lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1983:15). In other words, community exists in an individual consciousness as well as in the form of collective memories and identity. Discussing vitality of a community, Cohen stresses the importance of a complex of ideas and values shared by the community members. He sees strength of a community not “whether its structural limits have withstood the onslaught of social change, but whether its members are able to infuse its culture

⁵⁵ Tonnies named such driving forces “the essential will” (Tonnies 1887[1957])

with vitality, and to construct a symbolic community which provides meaning and identity” (Cohen 1994:9).

Criticism of the nostalgic understanding of community as a natural organic bonding of neighbours started as early as the mid-20th century (Simmel 1950, Effrat 1974). Recent empirical research shows that homogeneity and common interests of local community are usually overestimated (Tambini 1999), while the role of solidarities and fellowships over distances have been demonstrated to be growing.⁵⁶ Following Anderson (1983), trans-local bonding is labelled “communities of mind” by Gauntlett who discusses Internet connected possibilities for “like-minded people to form communities regardless of where they are located in the physical world” (Gauntlett 2001:13). Watson argues, that community is a product not of a shared space, but of shared *relationships* among people (Watson 1999:120). Contemporary scholarship holds that the notion of community is developing from territory-bounded into symbol-centred or relationship-centred, and only metaphorically linked with physical or virtual place.

Although there is a tendency (especially in literature on commercial aspects of the Internet) to perceive any virtual forum as a community, the definition should be more structured. “Even in the off-line world, a community does not come into existence simply because of the physical proximity of its members. A community is defined by the social relationships that form its underpinnings” (Lysloff 2003:256). Rheingold defined virtual community as “social aggregations that emerge ...when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace”(1994:5). Six years later, Rheingold (himself a creator of, and active participant in, various virtual groups) added: “I knew from direct experience that people can reach through those computer screens and touch each others life” (1999:172). He describes weddings, funerals he attended and visits to people he met through virtual friendships. Rheingold, Miller and Slater stress that virtual relationships, as with any personal contacts, are built up over time. Research (Nip 2004, Fernback *ibid*) shows that members of virtual

⁵⁶ See this dissertation 1.3. and 1.4.

communities are looking for and receive emotional response, that they create liaisons and form shared memories, and that the evidence of these is presented in physical, visible (mainly textual) forms on the Internet. Virtual communities demand emotional investment, a significant level of trust in relationships and a loyalty to the group in order to establish, keep and reproduce common ties between members.

In terms of functional perspective, virtual communities are affected, in the same way as physical communities, by problems of agency, power, roles, boundaries and structures, although virtual communities might have collective political, educational or service goals (or experiences) to intensify social interaction within the group. Communities constantly renegotiate their structures, values, and social space, and researchers can approach the former as processes rather than structures (Effrat 1974). Rheingold highlights the role of common purposes and values: “A virtual community has to have an affinity – the answer to the question: What would draw these people together” (1999:173).⁵⁷ These communities form relationships, create shared sets of values and are thus perceived as real by participants, although outsiders may consider them to be virtual: “The term ‘virtual’ means sometimes akin to unreal and so the entailments of calling online communities “virtual” include spreading and reinforcing a belief that what happens online is like a community, but it isn’t really a community. My experience has been that people in the offline world tend to see online communities as virtual, but that participants in the online communities see them as quite real (Watson 1999:129)”⁵⁸. Watson believes that, just as for a physical local community, a virtual community is able to generate a discourse and unite “scattered” people by meaning-sharing.

⁵⁷ Scholars have analysed diverse virtual communities of various interests, purposes and experiences: for example, musical (Lysloff, 2003), sexual minorities (Nip, 2004).

⁵⁸There is a great deal of literature discussing interconnections between on-line and off-line communities and a wide spectrum of opinions is expressed therein. Lockard (1997) warns about the possible extraction of people from their territorial community and the further alienation by the local population because of active social connections on-line; Foster (1997) believes that the Internet encourages people to withdraw from “real” public life.

2.5. e. Digital diasporas: national minorities on-line

CMC are inherently diasporic in terms of assisting and stimulating communication across geographical and political borders. Empirical research into diasporic web-places (e.g. created by national, ethnic or religious minorities) is widening and relevant literature will be critically analysed here to compare virtual spaces created by indigenous minorities with the migrants' ones. Scholars are analysing digital diasporas by mapping the virtual space, describing the content of ethnic web-sites and investigating links between similar forums or web-sites.

2.5 e.1. Digital diasporas: Virtually native

Studies of the use of the Internet by indigenous minorities are concerned with the influence of on-line communications on the unique cultural heritage of the ethnic group⁵⁹ and the role of the Internet in the ethnic community-central government power paradigm. Authors discuss whether the use of the computer as a medium helps to preserve or tends to destroy cultures and traditions of such ethnic groups; their concern is with the power relationships between indigenous minorities and various bodies and institutions (Arnold and Plymire 2001).

Froehling discusses the case of a political campaign organised on the Internet by the indigenous Zapatista population of the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. He shows how ethnic web-sites publish and circulate news from the region to create an international network of supporters outside Chiapas. While in this case an ethnic presence on the Internet is used to undermine the state monopoly of mass communications, Arnold and Plymire in the article 'The Cherokee Indians and the Internet' (2001) discuss the Internet's ability to assist in community construction. They investigate through the prism of ethnic web-sites the differences in self-representation between the East and West Bands of the Cherokee tribe (the latter is

⁵⁹ Some authors stress that the universalism and individualism of the Internet are antithetical to the ethics and traditions of tribalism (Howe 1999:7) and bring a negative popularisation of the sacred knowledge of ethnic groups (e.g. e-shamanism); as a result, they believe that symbols of primordial essence (genetic and cultural similarities, special connections to the place of residence) should not be articulated by means of new technologies. An opposite opinion holds that the interactive and "pictographic" character of Internet texts is particularly well suited for educational purposes among indigenous populations.

known officially as the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma). This tribe divided violently at the beginning of the 19th century and the official web-sites of the two Bands (whilst giving access to the culture and traditions of the common ethnic group) represent a “striking contrast” (Arnold and Plymire 2001:190) in terms of auditorium, content and community politics. The authors stress that the question of assimilation is acute in both Bands and a significant part of the material on both the official sites reflects the Cherokee commitment to improving command of the native language, restoring storytelling traditions and creating their own version of history. But in the Eastern band a commitment “to be less reliant on outside businesses and organisations” (*ibid*:192) through education is spelled out. Both web-sites provide access to press releases and official documents, but the set of documents is different, reflecting contrasting approaches of the communities to the tribal identities. The Oklahoma Cherokee web-site is designed primarily for local Cherokees and sympathetic outsiders and provides links to educational and local services, information on community development, finances, genealogy, as well as news and politics. The Eastern Band’s web-site leads a visitor directly to tourist links in the area and positions the Cherokee territory as a visitor attraction, stressing the ethnic uniqueness of the territory and its sovereignty. Based on the sites, two types of Cherokee virtual identity may be distinguished. The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma site “offers the possibility of developing a sense of community by linking people to services... and to each other” (*ibid*), thus assisting in negotiations between ethnic and American identities. The East Band is administered as a reservation (semi-sovereign territory) and the authors consider that the official web-site promotes images of cultural continuity and uniqueness, prioritising images of Cherokee people as ancient owners of the land, rather than encouraging civic USA identity. This case study shows the role of CMC in the hierarchy of social authorities and demonstrates that the Internet, whilst being a universal medium, can also involve locally conditioned experiences which can be explored in place-based ethnography (Miller and Slater, 2000).

To summarise, ethnic web-sites of indigenous peoples serve as a tool for strengthening a sense of ethnic identity, implying that there is a tie between self and

place of living. Searching through minority web-sites one can see that they are widely used for teaching the native language, history and traditions. In some cases indigenous groups use the Internet as a means of informing the world about some of their acute problems or of exercising political pressure and achieving political goals.

2.5.e.2. Naturally virtual

The virtual landscape created by migrants is even wider and more diverse. The on-line communications of migrants include multipurpose web-sites, web-sites of business companies and political campaigns, personal web-pages, electronic versions of newspapers, links to periodicals and organisations etc. This variety cannot be easily classified or systematised; it does not fit strict categorisation models (see Bunt 2003, Silver 2001). Although the scholarly process of digital diaspora mapping is in its early stages, recent literature offers some analysis of migrants' on-line communications. The intention of this subchapter is to demonstrate that the web-sites of various migrant minorities strengthen (and partly reconstruct) a collective identity by locating migrants' "home" in virtual places, which combines narratives of the native land and the host country.

Attempting to reflect on the activity and importance of CMC for migrants, Mallapragada uses a notion of "digital diasporas", specifying interpersonal bonds between contributors and an integrity of collective identity. Drawing on Reingolds (1994), who stated that virtual communities were in part a response to the hunger for community following the disintegration of traditional connections, and evoking the understanding of nation as an "imagined community" (Anderson 1996) where members might not know each other personally, Mallapragada states that "the digital diaspora is symptomatic of the need to forge cultural and social alliances that create a sense of identity" (Mallapragada 2000).

Extending this understanding, Adams and Ghose stress that digital diasporas are "not containers of people", but "networks of obligations, knowledge sharing and commitment" (Adams and Ghose 2003: 419), and that in digital diasporas "people,

goods, capital and ideas are thereby channelled across the vast cultural and geographical divide” (*ibid* :416).

“Digital diasporas” highlight the process of identity negotiations on-line. It has been suggested that digital diasporas generate a different understanding of ethnic belonging. Mallapragada (2000) argues that, through the process of formulating their group solidarities, migrants reinvent their national identity. Digital diaspora generates new interpersonal links and exists through the ethnic divisions within the off-line diaspora. For example, studying Indian digital diasporas, Radhakrishnan (1994) stated that ethnic selves in on-line communications are very different from identities within India and observed the reinvention of one’s national identity (from India) as an ethnic minority identity (Asian-Indian).

The majority of modern migration waves consist of collections of ethnicities. This fact challenges the self-perception of ethnic belonging during computer-mediated communications, and promotes an imagined cultural homogeneity (fraternity – Lea and Spears 2.2.c) within diasporas. As Adams and Ghose note, “the term *ethnic group* implies not only a primordiality but a coherence, a *groupness* that is imposed (from within and without) to strengthen one group *vis-à-vis* other groups, but not all groups are equally coherent.... While Tamil, for example, constitutes an ethnicity in India, it is clear that in the USA the host society does not generally recognise this ethnic identity or know of the place of origin that it indicates ”(Adams and Ghose 2003: 415). Researchers even suggested using a notion of “sub-ethnic” (Adams and Ghose 2003) to indicate groups defined by language, culture and region of origin within diasporas. Discussing this phenomenon in connection with Europe and Great Britain in particular, Schlesinger writes about “supranationality” (Schlesinger 2002:645). This feature is relevant to this study: migrants from the former Soviet Union have created a digital diaspora to cater for people of various ethnic backgrounds, but united by the language of communication, common personal experiences and culture of upbringing⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ A definition “Russian-speaking” is accepted in this study to account for this (see 2.3.a).

In the macro-social perspective, the re-imagining of national belongings evokes a notion of a “network state”, introduced by Castells, where understanding of a society shifts from thinking in terms of boundaries to thinking in terms of networks (Castells,1996).

Importantly, it is highlighted in the aforementioned works that on-line communications within national/ pan-national virtual spaces flourish only if the on-line discourse correlates with the off-line one (Nip 2004, Adams and Ghose 2003). The process of transcending ethnic divisions is not specific for CMC, but may be connected to wider off-line features of the contemporary public sphere. Nip mentions “the appearance of new communities on electronic civic networks helps to strengthen the offline geographic communities” (Nip 2004:412).

In his book “Power of Identity”, Castells demonstrates that the process of construction of alternative meanings forms “cultural communes” that “appear as reactions to prevailing social trends, which are resisted on behalf of autonomous sources of meaning. They are, at their onset, defensive identities that function as refuge and solidarity, to protect against a hostile, outside world. They are culturally constructed; that is, organised around a specific set of values whose meaning and sharing are marked by specific codes of self-identification...”(Castells 1997:65). Perceptions of their commonality along with their differences compared to others are influenced by various identities – such as national, regional, religious, gendered, occupational and others (Jones 1995, Mitra 1997, Morley and Robins 1995). Crang argues that these identities and connected practices “act through, and on, technoscience and transnationalism” (1999:79) as “material-semiotic discourses”⁶¹ (*ibid*).

A significant part of on-line communications is connected to migrants’ connections with the native land and their reflections on commonalties of origin. The symbol of “home” is constructed both through personal tangible impressions and experiences of everyday life as well as from collective images and memories of the place of origin.

⁶¹ In a sense that the above combine technology, equipment and discursive practices.

The combination of nostalgia and reality in recreating home in the host culture is broadly symptomatic of diasporic cultures (Naficy 1993, Wodak 1999). In the case of a on-line communications it is expressed, for example, in multiple links to web-sites produced in the culture of origin, various sources of news about the native land and web-places catering for ethnically specific needs.

Migrants also directly address the experience of moving between countries and the practicalities of current life, including information about passports, visa regulations, flights, overseas money transfers, gifts and remittances. Participants can discuss these issues while enjoying confidentiality⁶².

Migrant web-sites reflect on ethnic or nation-specific ways of living and on sets of values of cultures of origin. Although the list of topics covered in various digital diasporas is similar, the content of the adverts and discussions encapsulate the traditional values and lifestyle of migrants. For example, analysing and comparing matrimonial advertisements in Russian-language migrants' media with those in CMC of migrants originating from India, it is possible to discern significant differences in terms of the authors and their conception of future relationships and their values:

Participants/purposes/values of matrimonial web-sites of Russian and Indian migrants.

| | Russian | Indian |
|--------------|--|--|
| Participants | Individual himself/herself | Parents, older siblings |
| Purpose | Dating, marriage, friendship | Marriage |
| Values | Physical features, Character, habits, hobbies Education Ethnicity | Education/employment Caste/complexion (shade of skin) Horoscope matching Ethnicity/religion |

⁶² A situation which Mallapragada (2001) sees as being one of the liberating features of the Internet: in his opinion, the Internet allows anonymity to a greater degree than other types of communication, thereby facilitating the articulation and circulation of personal histories and memories, and allowing publicly expressed intimate nostalgic narratives.

The table is based on the comparative analysis of Adams and Ghose (2003) and findings of the research project “Mass Media of Russian communities” (University of Edinburgh 2003). It demonstrates significant national specific differences in terms of personal responsibilities (who is arranging a meeting), goals, and culturally specific values.

Another example of a culture-specific aspect of web-communications concerns the generation of traditional power relationships on-line. While in the majority of CMC discussions, power positions are associated with participants who are either more active in communication (Lysloff 2003) or who apply personal experiences of the discussed subject, relationships may be structured differently in other digital diasporas. For example, Bunt (studying web-sites of Muslim diasporas in various countries) describes on-line sessions as mainly question-answer or question-comment sessions, where positions of authority belong to a religious leader or organisation (Bunt 2003:193). He notes that although many web-sites incorporate a variety of services for dispersed communities (e.g. matrimonial and financial) and discuss many non-religious questions (e.g. use of credit cards, organ donations, music, and lottery), such web-sites highlight the religious perspective to any advice and “place greater emphasis on their [religious authorities’] leadership and networking issues” (ibid). Adams and Ghose also highlight the social engagement of CMC, considering them to be an extrapolation of traditional cultural relationships into virtual space: “Physical places and virtual places can be compared on the basis of the typologies of social relationships they support, despite radical differences in the means of bounding and shaping those typologies.”(Adams and Ghose 2003).

At the same time Bunt reflects on the “liberating” aspects of the Internet and underlines the importance of the anonymity of virtual communications in order to articulate various non-mainstream perspectives. He writes about the potential of “Cyber Islamic Environments ... to transform aspects of religious understanding and expression, and the power to enable elements within the population to discuss aspects of religious interpretation and authority with each other, and to consult with authorities both from traditional and non-traditional centres, in some cases

submerging what were conventional channels for opinions on religious issues. The question shall be asked whether this enhances or challenges traditional forms of knowledge about Islam” (2003:202). It is possible to draw a conclusion that CMC of migrants, whilst embedding distinctive features of the native cultures, are necessarily patterned by the influences of the host cultures. The geographical realities and cultural features of the host country invest uniqueness into each digital diaspora.

Digital diasporas contain a number of web-sites for establishing various connections with the new country of residence, or sometimes a particular region of that country. Migrants widely use Internet as a tool to help navigate their lives as immigrants, to integrate successfully. Their web-sites contain links to various local bodies providing information about education and employment, business advice, municipal or government activities. Mailing lists, electronic boards and regional web-sites, connecting migrants with the host country, are labelled “place specific” because they are patterned with the traditions and lifestyle of that host country: “While so much of cyberculture exists without shared geographic space, a large segment does indeed exist within and for shared spaces...Here community members come together – not face to face, but rather online to discuss local issues” (Silver 2001:12). Locally bounded information is often connected via links or sometimes through the pages of multipurpose web-sites of migrants. The locally-provided content of web-communications partly explains the diversity of web-forums created in different countries by migrants of the same origin.

However, in the long-term perspective, interconnections between migrants’ identity and the context of the host culture are more complex. The context of the host culture exercises a multifaceted and profound impact on identity negotiations of migrants, defining the cultural and cognitive landscape of any diaspora. New experiences and realities are integral to the dynamics of identity construction. Migration and life in the host country form different symbolic meanings and a different hierarchy of values, contrasting with identity formation in the place of origin. The construction of meanings by migrants is influenced by the cultural norms and collective values of the host culture.

To summarise, virtual communities represent an organic sphere of contemporary social life and both the functional and symbolic approaches are relevant to their study. On-line as well as off-line common activities (advice, property sharing, mutual help and support) demonstrate functional features of these migrant communities. Intense on-line communications of migrants allow for the creation of a specific set of values and myths. Such a symbolic concept emerges through negotiations of the new experiences with the “picture of the world” shared by people back home, as well as through collective discussions of the new experiences. Re-negotiations of cultural belonging on-line stimulated by the interactive character of the Internet as a medium, but always reflective of the realities: of the marginal character of diasporic consciousness and the multiethnic construction of the majority of diasporas.

The borderlessness of virtual communications is diasporic by nature and sprouts communities across geographical divisions. At the same time, it was noted here that there are significant differences between web-sites of indigenous peoples and migrants’ communities. The former, being diasporic in terms of “gathering” people of the same origin, serve primarily as a tool for strengthening attachments to a locality whereas the latter, virtual places created by migrants, stimulate bonding between each other. Participants negotiate their ethnographic experiences and promote a re-evaluation of narratives of their native culture and heritage, re-creating the meaning of their national belonging. The Internet is used by migrants to negotiate their territorial belonging: from being from somewhere to being of a place. Their ethnic identifications are often challenged and rescaled to supra-national or supra-regional solidarities. Such negotiations represent a dynamic phenomenon, because “self is not an entity but a state of feeling, an integral part of the process of consciousness unfolding over time” (Eakin 2004:129). On-line communications in the diaspora necessarily embed distinctive features of the native cultures, but are also patterned with the host cultures.

Extensive scholarship on Russian national identity⁶³ and Russian-speaking migrations was critically analysed here. Such analysis enhanced my understanding of Russian cultural identity dispositions as imperial legacy, territorial self-identification, shadowed and unspecified ethnic questions, and prestige of intellectual traditions of the past and facilitated further investigation of the research questions defined in the Introduction.

The chapter demonstrated that the research of national identity is still developing among scholars working in social sciences as well as among those in cultural studies. It was considered essential to take a broader look at the debates and findings in the area of Identity studies in order to define the framework for such specific aspects as marginal national identities and migrants' collective self-representation in mediated electronic communications. Adopting a social constructivist stance, identities are seen in this study as discursively constructed, and constantly in the process of reconfiguration⁶⁴. Self-representation of migrants on-line is approached as (a) a search for a group identity, rather than individual activity of participating in virtual discussions⁶⁵ (b) as reflecting wider dilemmas of inclusion/exclusion and separation/integration in the new society⁶⁶, and (c) shaped by the native culture and language.

⁶³ See 2.3.

⁶⁴ 2.1.c, 2.1.d.,

⁶⁵ See 2.5.

⁶⁶ See 2.2.

CHAPTER 3

3.1. FOCUSING THE STUDY

The specific focus of this dissertation is on the self-representation of migrants in their virtual communications using the language of their country of origin. The study is concerned with the analysis of culture-specific discourses of migrants of the same origin and with tracing the emergence of “host context” dependent meanings. Migrants are discussed as a marginal group in a process of intense identity negotiations. They are a product and producers of discourse, combining “unspeakable stories of subjectivity” and “narratives of a culture” (Hall 1990:225). This dissertation examines how migrants, during the constant process of interpreting reality through their mediated communications, construct their understandings of being Russian, being a migrant and being a newcomer to Britain.

First, the methodological framework of my investigation will be explained and a working model of the study defined. The second part of this chapter provides an overview of the challenges provided by the material defines the corpus and describes sampling techniques.

Part 1

3.2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The methodological framework for the study of the discursive construction of migrants’ identities combines Foucault’s analysis of discourse as monologue/unity with Lotman’s analysis of culture as translation. Migrants’ identity negotiations are informed by discourses of the country of origin in both synchronic and historic perspective, and Foucault’s ideas of discourse permit the investigation of the relations of power that underline migrants’ national identity. Migrants are also subjected to the host culture’s influences, and therefore Lotman’s ideas of a dialogue between cultures are instrumental in any analysis of change and mutation.

3.2.a. Foucault's analysis of discourse: Power, discourse and knowledge

The Foucauldian tradition of the analysis of discourse is aimed at revealing power relations and ways of expressing hidden social or cultural meaning. Foucault's approach refers to discourse as simultaneously being the means and the effects of power.

First of all, according to the philosopher, power is exercised by constructing meanings (and social relationships in general) through discourse: it is "in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (1980:59). Foucault analyses relations between power and knowledge in discourse by tracing public understanding of such phenomena as crime, madness and sexuality. For example, he shows that madness in the Middle Ages was considered harmless and sometimes even divine, while in contemporary societies the same phenomenon is constructed by medical discourse and controlled by institutions that exercise discipline.

Secondly, Foucault believes that discourses create knowledge and thus exercise power (through dominant discourses and, partly, counter-discourses). Knowledge produced by discourse is inextricably bound up with power networks, making it accessible and available for reproduction:

...groups of objects, methods, their corpus of propositions considered to be true, the interplay of rules and definitions, of techniques and tools: all these constitute a sort of anonymous system, freely available to whoever wishes, or whoever is able to make use of them, without there being any question of their meaning or their validity being derived from whoever happened to invent them" (2000 [1970]: 236).

Such shared knowledge as a system of conventions constitutes, according to Foucault, "a system of control in the production of discourse, fixing its limits through the action of an identity taking the form of a permanent reactivation of the rules [internal rules of discourse]" (*ibid.*: 237). This phenomenon is examined in the researched communication of migrants who, while living abroad, reactivate such rules and re-create the objects of knowledge formed by their native society discourses, extrapolating them into their present cultural reality.

Discourses are able to impose assumptions as objective knowledge through a special process which Foucault terms *naturalisation*¹. For example, in his book “Discipline and Punish” (1977), Foucault showed how power networks influence a society by discoursing the ideas of “normal” or “abnormal” as well as “right” and “wrong”, filling these categories with meanings and then policing them using external and internal discursive powers.:

In short, a proposition must fulfil some onerous and complex conditions [...]; before it can be pronounced true or false it must be [...] “in the true” (Foucault 1972:226).

The function of control is exercised by discourse through the imposition of discursive mental constructions as objective knowledge².

External and Internal Influences

As shown above, discourses, according to Foucault, represent an anonymous system whose validity is accepted by power networks:

I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures (2000 [1970]:216).

Foucault specifies the production of discourse and the emergence of new knowledge as being subject to the following influences by the society.

- a) external [to the discourse] influences, “supported by a system of institutions imposing and manipulating them [discourses], acting not without constraints, nor, without an element, at least, of violence” (2000[1970]:232);
- b) “internal rules, where discourse exercises its own control; rules concerned with the principles of classification, ordering, and distribution” (*ibid*: 234). These rules are “reinforced and accompanied by whole strata of practices” (*ibid*: 233). Among these practices the main concern of Foucault is “the manner in which knowledge is employed

¹ See 3.3.c.

² Foucault highlights the productive character of the power of discourse, which “needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” (1982:119).

in a society, the way in which it is exploited, divided and, in some ways, attributed” (*ibid*: 234).

As with any discourse, the on-line identity discourse of Russian-speaking migrants is influenced by external rules in the form of “a system of institutions imposing discourses”. These “external” influences encompass migrants’ experiences of the host country as well as their constant physical and virtual connection with the country of origin. Migrants visit their native countries, keep in touch with their relatives, read and quote Russian language sources of information. Internet forums in which migrants communicate are also institutionalised and subjected to some regulations: web-spaces represent somebody’s property; there are written rules of participation, and a group of moderators is in charge of observing how these rules are followed³.

At the same time the external (institutionalised by the society at large) influences on the migrants’ discourse (with possibilities of control and punishment) are lessened under the condition of anonymity and exterritoriality of virtual communication⁴.

Although the power of external influences is lessened by the situation of emigration and non-physical communication, the researched group living in the diaspora reproduces narratives of the Russian national identity discourse. Thus, migrants’ discourse on-line highlights the role of internal rules of discourse of re-creating and imposing the “naturalised” knowledge on the participants. This virtual setting allows examination of Foucault’s main concern (see above), the manner in which knowledge is employed in a society.

³ In details see 3.8.a.

⁴ At least referring to control and punishment in their real (physical) senses. In terms of virtual punishment there are possibilities of deleting messages and “banning” on-line personalities from participation. Therefore an on-line community and an institute of moderators embody external influences to the on-line discourse of migrants, but the influence of real-life institutions (e.g. police, government, educational and medical authorities etc.) is minimised.

3.3. INTERNAL RULES OF DISCOURSE. UNITS OF DISCOURSE

3.3.a. Objects of Discourse - Objects of Knowledge

Foucault understands discourses as specific ways in which people think of or discuss phenomena or processes. He points out the difficulty of recognising and acknowledging them: “the problem is at once to distinguish [discourses] among events, to differentiate the networks and levels to which they belong and endanger one another” (1982:114).

In order to unearth regularities the scholar suggests analysing connections and hierarchies (in his own words “a reciprocal functioning, linked and hierarchized transformations” 1972:37), rather than elements of different levels. For example, differentiating discourse analysis from linguistic analysis, Foucault states "The question posed by language analysis of some discursive factor or other is always: according to what rules has a particular statement been made, and consequently according to what rules could other similar statements be made. The description of the events of discourse poses quite a different question: how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?" (1972: 27).

Foucault introduces the categories of objects and rules (strategies) of discourse:

“Discursive relations ...offer it [discourse] objects of which it can speak, or rather (for this image of offering presupposes that objects are formed independently of discourse), they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them, etc. These relations characterise not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice.” (1972: 33)⁵.

Discourses constitute objects they can speak about, and these objects receive a life of their own as shared knowledge. The scholar accounts for such discursively constructed objects of knowledge as assumptions which are believed to be true, anonymous and publicly accepted, as well as “principles of classification, ordering” (rules, strategies):

One should be aware of the disjunction of opinions expressed by “early” and “late” Foucault. For example, “late” Foucault points out that “ the history which bears and determines us has the form of war rather than that of language: relations of power, not relations of meanings” (1982:114)

Objects are formed by the discourse. In “The Archaeology of Knowledge”, Foucault analyses this process by examining a particular example - the discourse of nineteenth-century psychiatry: "a variety of objects were named, circumscribed, analysed, and then rectified, re-defined, challenged, erased. Is it possible to lay down the rule to which their appearance was subject?" (1972:40-41).

First, Foucault identifies the social and intellectual areas where the formation of a new object is possible and terms them *the surfaces of emergence*: "In these fields of initial differentiation, in the distances, the discontinuities, and the threshold that appear within it, psychiatric discourse finds a way of limiting its domain, of defining what it is talking about, of giving it the status of an object - and therefore of making it manifest, nameable, and describable" (*ibid*: 41). For example, in the case of “madness” as an object of knowledge, Foucault suggests that the surfaces were likely to be located in the family as well as in the religious, work and communal environments. Art and sexuality constituted new surfaces for emergence of “madness”.

In connection with the areas of emergence, the philosopher points out the roles of “authorities of delimitation”, who are able to define and designate the objects and whose expertise is accepted by society. In case of physiopathology, Foucault distinguishes medical institutions, legal and religious authorities.

The scholar accounts for the systems of classification within which objects are compared and divided. He terms them "grids of specification" (*ibid*: 42). For example, in the case of the 19th century, Foucault specifies the soul, the body, the disease and the destiny.

This study argues that migrants’ identity discourse also produces object(s) of knowledge and intends to define it/them, the surfaces of emergence and grids of specification of such object(s).⁶

⁶ see 3.6.

3.3.b. Rules of discourse

Foucault emphasizes the role of rules of discourses. The notion of archaeology, as Foucault designed it, “tries to define [...] the discourses as practices obeying certain rules” (1972:138). The scholar underlines that these rules, which are always temporally and spatially positioned, are instrumental for discursive practices: “a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation...” (*ibid*: 117).

3.3.b.1. Naturalisation (normalisation)

As stated above (3.2.a), the notion of naturalisation was developed by Foucault in his book “Discipline and Punish”. The scholar challenges the perceptions that shared knowledge is able to revealing some hidden truth” (1977, 232), that understandings of “right” and “false” shall be seen as natural and primordial. He terms discursive practices of conceptualising reality as “naturalisation”, because the discourses impose an understanding of what is “true”, “natural” or “normal” and what is not on their participants: “one would only be in the true, however, if one obeyed the rules of some discursive “policy” which would have to be reactivated every time one spoke” (*ibid*: 237). Foucault points out that what is believed to be objective knowledge (“truth”) is artificially produced by the conventional nature of the power of discourse and represent a product of power relations of the time: “[...] this will be not truth [objective knowledge] which has survived throughout so many centuries of our history”, but “the system of exclusion (historical, modifiable, institutionally constraining) in the process of development” (*ibid*: 233).

Naturalisation is enforced through a special discursive censorship, which Foucault calls a discipline: “Disciplines constitute a system of control in the production of discourse, fixing its limits through the action of an identity taking the form of a permanent reactivation of the rules” (*ibid*: 237). In line with Foucault, it is possible to “unearth” and analyse assumptions accepted as natural and normal by migrants, these being those

assumptions that represent the effects of power relationships that existed (and sometimes exist) in the country of origin.

3.3.b.2 *Silences (Absences)*

The concept of absences is bound up with the nature of discourses being created by power relationships. Institutions exercise their power through discourse, and discourse provides a particular angle from which a topic is approached, limiting other ways in which the object of knowledge might be constructed. *Absences* (or *silences* in some translations) refer to the idea that some possible interpretations or explanations are not voiced or even thought out; that some phenomena or facts are ignored.

Foucault refers to the concept of absences (lacunae in discursive formation) and pinpoints the importance of them through his books (“Since it is sometimes necessary to dot the 'i's of even the most obvious absences”-1972:70). He fully articulates this rule of discourse, discussing the questions of children’s sexuality. The scholar specifies that discourse represses a topic or a phenomenon “to the point where it [discourse] refused even to [...] acknowledge its existence” (1972:120).

Thus absences emerge through the process of “naturalisation”. They represent one of the strategies through which the discourse imposes exclusion/inclusion dilemmas. Thus an absence emerges as a mechanism of legitimisation of knowledge. An account for absences can help unearth strategic selection of meanings within discourses. By identifying “silenced” objects, topics or relationships it is possible to identify the direction of the process of normalisation within the discourse.

Building on Foucault, this study aims to trace the direction of naturalisation and silencing in order to show in which way migrants’ identity discourse legitimises power relationships after the displacements.

3.4. LOTMAN: TRANSLATING BETWEEN CULTURES

3.4.a Translation between cultures

Lotman, founder of the Moscow-Tartu School of semiotics, maintains that a study of culture is impossible without taking into account the transformative essence of meaning. Culture is seen by him both as a mechanism for the production of meanings, and as a space where these meanings coexist: a “semiotic space or intellectual world in which humanity and human society are enfolded and which is in constant interaction with the individual intellectual world of human beings”(Lotman1990: 3).

For Lotman, oppositions condition meaning construction. Lotman believes that any communication involves two channels: the first represents a linear transmission of information, the second involves a “translation” e.g. reviewing of information, which alters its meaning (1990:22, 36). The same mechanism, Lotman argues, works for a culture (or cultures) in general. The aforementioned channels represent two types of codification, and the contacts between systems (cultures) are productive: translation contributes to the emergence of new meanings, signs, symbols and semiotic objects: “Any culture is constantly bombarded by chance isolated texts which fall on it like a shower of meteorites. [...] But in fact they are important factors in the stimulus of cultural dynamics” (Lotman 1990:18). The act of translation becomes an act of creation of new meanings and phenomena, which inculcate, resemble, re-imagine but do not copy the originals.

3.4.b. Centre and periphery: role of boundaries

Asymmetry of both semiotic space and of individual semiotic signs refers to the ideas of centre and periphery. The centre is monological, stable, and untranslatable; it attempts to regulate the periphery, which is subjected to various external influences. The periphery represents an area of cultural dialogism, where the information is generated.

Lotman writes that the periphery is the semiotic "hot spot" (1990:136) and "the entire space of the semiosphere is transcended by boundaries of different levels" (*ibid*:138),

where different ways of explaining and systematising the world collide, as do different images of the world. (1990: 110).” The process of construction of new meanings is focused here, both encompassing the boundaries and maintaining them during the process of translation.

The constant tension between similarity and contrast (us and them, inside and outside) during translation enables creative acts.⁷ Lotman elaborates that one can develop self-concepts only through difference, comparison and interaction. Thus the scholar creates a fundamental epistemological claim that a culture and its productivity are inextricably connected with the process of othering.

3.4.c. Lotman’s model of cultural change: appropriation of external

Lotman discusses from a semiotic perspective the process of the appropriation of “external” (foreign or new) cultural symbols by a stable cultural system and states that *“Имманентное развитие культуры не может осуществляться без постоянного притока текстов извне. Причем это извне может иметь сложную организацию...”* (Lotman 2001[1983]:610). He describes multiple codifications of new symbols as a stage in the incorporation of “external” (foreign or new) cultural symbols by a stable cultural system⁸. In this process of incorporation, a dialogue forms the periphery of such a stable cultural system. Lotman writes that in the process of constantly adding to the system, new components are separately assessed by the system according to certain “meta-lingual” (*метаязыковые*) criteria, the “dominant codes” (*доминирующие коды*) of the culture.

This assessment draws a distinction between the culturally existent “*культурно существующие*” (high, valuable, cultural, native etc) and the culturally non-existent or

⁷Lotman’s concept of translation and opposition is in a way similar to the Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue. (compare with the notion of polylogue, created by Lotman; Bakhtin’s “doubly orientated word”- “*двухголосое слово*” and Lotman’s “autocommunication”). Bakhtin mentions the importance of cultural differences: “It is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly... We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not raise itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it” (Bakhtin 1986:7).

⁸ In this study the Russian national identity discourse represents a stable system while new experiences of the host culture can be seen as external elements.

апокрыфал “культурно несуществующие” (low, non-valuable, foreign) (ibid) phenomena.

On the one hand, the cultural phenomena created in the process of multiple codifications are “translatable” (*переводимый*), that is comprehensible to the cultural system, but, on the other hand, they bear features of an external culture. Lotman writes that without such translation (as a meaningful modification), the cultural appropriation (*культурное переживание*) of external (*запредельный*) cultural context, is impossible. The phenomenon mutated in this way is productive in the new culture but at the same time is inherently internally contradictory. For example, Lotman (2001) discusses the myth of the West created by Russian culture through the process of communication with new external cultural influences. He shows that the West imagined by Russians was not the West as an external system, but a symbol created through the process of codification of Russian cultural perceptions. It existed only as an ideal: the reality of relationships of Russian westerners with the real West was problematic⁹.

This codification is not a singular act, but continuous formation of a new image as a dialectic symbiosis of both the internal and external cultures. Such codification is meta-cultural since it is constructed under the influences of other social domains (political institutions, economic tendencies etc) and subjected to power relationships and discourses of the time. Therefore it occurs in different directions with different speeds. The newly-created phenomenon starts a life of its own and represents from this moment a new point of reference for the cultural system under investigation¹⁰. This study aims at analysing the dynamics of cultural translation and modes of cultural appropriation within migrants’ identity discourse.

⁹ For details see this dissertation 2.3.c. and 2.4.

¹⁰ Lotman illustrates this process by the symbol/myth of Pushkin in Russian culture, which “was extremely culturally active on its own” (2001: 611).

3.5. CONDUCTING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: METHODS

3.5.a. Empirical studies based on Foucault's discourse analysis. Foucault and the discipline of Russian Studies

I. There is a growing body of empirical works based on Foucault's methodology of identifying objects of knowledge and rules of discourse. Some recent empirical works will be briefly observed here to show how various researchers employ his methods.

Carabine (2001) uses this methodology to show how public discourse of the 1990s in Britain stigmatised unmarried mothers. First, from the available texts she identifies the surfaces of emergence by analysing the institutions and subjects lone mother were connected to (family, welfare, legal system, British communities). Then she looks at how the object of knowledge is formed through the process of naturalisation: how the subjects that in a way "personify" the discourse emerge, how single mothers are thought of and spoken about. Carabine shows that all lone mothers were spoken about as a homogeneous group and the object of the discourse "unmarried motherhood" has been created through linking this group to criminality and social dependency. The scholar analyses the grids of specification in existence since the nineteenth century and found out that the same subject – the child – was absent in both discourses.

Some scholars attempt to combine Foucault with other research approaches. For instance, Cahnmann, Rymes, and Souto-Manning use Critical Discourse Analysis¹¹ and Foucauldian analysis to examine identification processes of bilingual adults becoming teachers. They employ the methodology of Foucault to investigate how power relationships influence identification processes. But at a later stage of their research they used CDA to analyse changes in identification of bilinguals – in the authors' words "looking at face-to-face talk and its relationship to Foucauldian discourse" (2005:195).

¹¹ 3.5.b.

In yet another study Graham examines ADHD as a discursive construct and combines Foucault's and Wetherall's approaches. For example, she looks for *things said* that *function* with constitutive effects to speak into existence an object of knowledge (2005:10).

Most importantly, Foucault's methodology in these works proves to be directly adoptable for empirical studies. The observed works also demonstrate the possibility of the symbiosis of Foucauldian analysis with other research perspectives.

II. There is a growing influence of theoretical works of Foucault on scholars examining Russian, Soviet and Post-Soviet history and public discourses. A number of recent works in the discipline of Russian Studies refer to Foucault and his methodology.

In his article "Foucault's Gulag" Plamper examines the legacy of Foucault and attempts to fulfil several tasks. The researcher carefully collects Foucault's remarks about Russia and its regimes hoping that researchers with interest both in Russia and Foucault will be able to access scattered texts and quote from them. Plamper also analyses the dynamics of Foucault's contribution to debates about Gulag and to the question of legality in Russia. Importantly, Plamper examines possible limitations of Foucault's system of thought with regard to Russian/Soviet data. In Plamper's own words, he turns to epistemological questions "that arise when Foucauldian concepts, empirically grounded in the West, are applied to non-Western locals" (2002:259).

Plamper shows that the scholar made attempts to put Russian political and cultural practices in a larger picture of European moral and values. Foucault points out that Soviet communists adopted and maintained "bourgeois values [...] (in art, the family, sexuality, and daily life in general)" (2002:258). He also writes about "subtle power mechanisms spread throughout the social body" (*ibid*:263) that ensured the inheritance of "social hierarchies, family life, sexuality and body" in Tsarist and Soviet Russia after a radical change of institutions in the country: "That is what has happened in the history of the Soviet Union: the seemingly new institutions were in fact conceived from

elements borrowed from the tsarist model, return to artistic realism, to traditional family morality: the Soviet Union fell back into norms inspired by bourgeois society of the 19th century”¹² (*ibid*). But Plamper shows that Foucault experiences theoretical problems as soon as he tries to classify Soviet penal practices (as well as Russian and Chinese policies in the area of sexuality) according to his (Foucault’s) typology of history.

Therefore, although finally stating that Foucault can be usefully applied to Russian cases, Plamper highlights the Eurocentric character of the scholar’s works and acknowledges several methodological and epistemological reservations.

Firstly, Plamper specifies a different character of official data in Russia. Public legal documents that represent the main source of information for Foucault’s investigations do not represent a full account of public practices in Russia. Such historic records are often not full, not representative or even non-relevant to real-life practices. Palmer exemplifies this by public documents of 1930s in Russia, noting that a researcher in this case would easily overlook counter-discourses.

Secondly, according to Plamper, methods of Foucault as historian contradict the hermeneutic tradition of this discipline in Russia with accentualised tradition of value judgements and public involvement in academic debates: “This levelling of sources may be acceptable for such Foucauldian projects as a history of Western subjectivity, but it proves disastrous for any historian working in a field that privileges traditional questions: what happened? Why? And, who is to blame”. (2002:272). Plamper believes that when conducting a Foucauldian research in Russian Studies a scholar should consider “conventions in the field [of knowledge]” and any “overlapping” with public debates.

¹² Quoted and translated by Palmer with reference to DE, vol2, no98, “par-dela le bien et le mal”, 1971:234

Thirdly, Plamper shares the existing critique of Eurocentric approach in Foucault's works, which is reflected in objects for analysis the theorist had chosen. Despite claims of universalism of his theoretical models, Foucault never engaged in studies of Eastern cultures and societies, or never compared Western subjectivity with Eastern discourses. The aforementioned limitations allow Plamper to summarise that the theorist "kept figuring this world through the lens of an essentialised binary opposition of East vs. West" (*ibid*: 273).

It is important to highlight that this critique was formulated with regard to Foucauldian genealogy both as a method of examination and as results of studies based on this method. Plamper concludes that the use of Foucault is applicable for Russian studies, but warns researchers that selecting one tool from the whole theoretical and methodological toolkit of the theorist should involve a selection process of the topic subjected to analysis and "a careful study of the logic of the field to which one is contributing" (*ibid*:279). It is instructive to analyse Plamper's reservations with regard to the current study.

In terms of data selection, contemporary Foucauldian discourse analysis in Russian Studies is not limited to the use of only legal public documents, but embraces a whole range of data (see III). The current study is based on publicly available and informal communication of migrants, reflecting a variety of practices in the diaspora.

Indeed, the questions of exile, migrants' identities and life of diaspora in general have a special place in Russian public discourse¹³, and involve emotional attitudes of various, non academic audiences. And the limitations inherent to such research as well as the issues of the subjectivity of a researcher will be discussed in detail in the conclusion of the dissertation. But due to the nature of this project (anonymity of participants, physical distance from the native country and from each other, analyses of archaeology, rather than genealogy of communication) the epistemological reservations described by

¹³ See 1.5.d and 2.4.

Plamper are minimised. The combination of the methodology of Foucault with that of Lotman, a semiotic theorist and a Russian Studies scholar also facilitates these issues.

Finally, the study is focused on identity negotiations of Russian-speaking migrants, settled in the UK. Their geographical location and process of integration in the host society makes the use of Foucault, as a theorist of Western subjectivity, relevant and justified for this study.

III. Here some other recent works that adopted the methodology of Foucault in the area of Russian studies will be discussed with the purpose of justifying the toolkit for the working model of this study.

Another attempt to examine possibilities and limitations of using Foucault's legacy in Russian Studies was made by Kharkhordin. The author attempts to analyse the discourse of selfhood in Russia. He approaches the Self as a construct, constituted by various authorities of delimitation through certain discursive "practices of individualisation": from "the ritualistic techniques" in the public realm to "practices of self-development and self-fashioning that make possible the adoption of individualist ideas and attitudes" (1999:3-4). He also combines the method of key words with Foucault's methodology in order to stress the continuity of grids of specification through Russian Imperial and later Soviet history. Although heavily using methodology of Foucault, Kharkhordin separates Foucault as historian from Foucault as discourse theorist by claiming that the scholar's historic framework has its limitations in Russia, and the genealogy of an individual is not fully applicable in Russia.

Popkin investigates Chekhov's work as ethnographer in "Ostrov Sakhalin" (Popkin 1992). Using Foucault's ideas of discourse she argues that the writer's failures had an epistemological character: when Chekhov starts conducting interviews his "*nauchnyi plan*", his great scientific project begins to fall apart almost immediately" (ibid:38). Popkin links her close reading of Chekhov with Foucault's statement that nothing meaningful can exist outside of discourse. She examines unsuccessful attempts of the

writer to investigate the local life of Sakhalin, pointing out his use of objects of knowledge created by the 20th century public discourse and relevant grids of specification¹⁴. Chekhov as scientist objectifies public discourses of contemporary society and fails to see that there are different authorities of delimitation in Sakhalin and therefore different discourses are produced there: there are no traditionally accepted authorities “either in terms of knowledge or in terms of power“ (*ibid*: 40). Popkin argues that as a result in “Ostrov Sakhalin” Chekhov highlights geographical boundaries by enforcing them with cultural and social arguments: he depicts Sakhalin as a land which is “not Russia”, “not Russian”, not “ours”, not “Europe” (1992:37).

In the same vein Cadiot connects Foucault’s ideas of discourse and scientific (sociological) discourse in Tsarist Russia (Cadiot 2005). She identifies “nationality” as an object of knowledge under construction by the statistics of the XIX century, and argues that scientific discourse imposed this object of knowledge on public. Referring to Foucault she writes: “Statistical studies were becoming a tool for disciplining and transforming the population, part of the state’s increasing reliance on policies focused on the population. Like ethnographers, statisticians played a major role in the process of transforming nationality into a crucial indicator of individual identity” (2005:441).

Kerov (2007) applies Foucault’s methodology to analyse the debates of the extreme right in the Russian Duma at the beginning of the 20th century and examines the authorities of delimitation in the parliamentary discourse of the time. The researcher shows how some political groups used non-verbal signs (as well as verbal means and specific behaviour) for the purpose of winning the authority to delimit, classify, and define political discourse of the time.

The aforementioned works examining Russian, Soviet and Post-Soviet history and public discourses are conducted using Foucault’s framework. Methodologically they are concerned with distinguishing “Discourse from the Non-Discursive” (Brown and

¹⁴ For example, his interlocutors were not able to answer questions about their nationality or marital status, because these criteria were not relevant to their everyday discourse.

Cousins 1994:188) and with “specifying discourses in their individuality” (*ibid*, 187). These studies demonstrate that Foucault’s analysis of discourse is not bounded to specific linguistic means and units of investigation; that a discourse permits strategic possibilities for different themes and could be supported by several other discourses simultaneously and consequently. The scholars used historical or epistemological, rather than linguistic forms of investigation, and identified such categories as discursive formation, object of knowledge, authorities of delimitation and grids of specification (etc.) as diagnostic in their examinations. The current study continues this tradition.

3.5.b. Other qualitative research perspectives

Other qualitative research perspectives (e.g. Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA] and the Discourse-Historical approach) have also influenced this dissertation, bringing with them their own methodology.

The Discourse-Historical approach accepts that representations of the world, social relations and identities are perceived as discursively constructed, and that they are all always connected to the discourses produced either earlier, synchronically or subsequently (Fairclough and Wodak 1997:268-280). Such an approach is relevant to the study of discursive construction of migrants’ identities, informed as they are by the national discourse of their country of origin in both synchronic and historic perspectives, and at the same time located at the marginal area of the host countries’ discourses.

Discourse in this study is seen as situated within an interaction and within specific historical and geographical settings, while the language is not perceived as transparent, but as interspersed with references to cultural and temporal phenomena. The CDA aims to unpack the opaque connections between narratives of everyday communications and power networks, to trace the ideological patterns that have been “naturalised” (Foucault 1977) and accepted as the only logical way of thought or lifestyle. On this point the academic positions of Wodak and Fairclough are very close. Fairclough recognises that “our social practice in general, and our use of language in particular, are bound up with

causes and effects which we may not be aware of under normal conditions” (Fairclough 1995:54). Wodak writes about attempts to make implicit relationships - in her own words “obscure structures of power, political control, and dominance” (Wodak *et al* 1999:8) - explicit by means of discourse analysis and also includes in the research agenda the “strategies of inclusion and exclusion in language use (*ibid.*)”. The latter was of high importance for this dissertation.

Although Foucauldian analysis is often defined as a different type of discourse analysis, its approach and that of CDA are closely related and cross-fertilise. “Discourse” in this case is understood as socially and temporally positioned ways of representing reality by individuals, groups and/or institutions, and discourse analysis can be defined as an “attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices and sociocultural practices” (Fairclough, 1995:16-17). In this dissertation, texts sent by Russian-speaking migrants to Internet forums are treated as a resource for the study of their (discursively constructed) national identities in order to identify patterns (“systematic links”) of their negotiated perceptions (“sociocultural practices”). It is claimed that discourse is not only reflective of the society, but constitutive of new socio-cultural practices as well as being the communication itself. In this vein, my thesis is analysing discursive practices that are triggered by some elements (key-words and patterns of their use) of the research texts.

Fairclough embraces various trends within discourse analysis: “There is no procedure for doing discourse analysis; people approach it in different ways according to the specific nature of the project as well as their own views of discourse” (1992:225). In this quote the scholar highlights the “nature of the project” which, according to him, can be connected to one or more of three discursively constructed domains: identities, interpersonal and inter-group relations, and representations of the world (Fairclough and Wodak 1997:273)¹⁵.

¹⁵ The current research deals mainly with the first and the last of these domains.

He also underlines the role of a researcher in the analysis (“own views of discourse”- *ibid*). According to Fairclough, the relationships between text and society are mediated by the researcher, whose identity inevitably influences the process of interpretation. One of the challenges of doing discourse analysis in this type of study is the sheer richness of the material which makes it practically impossible to reach a point in the study at which the data is exhausted, and the text is always open for further interpretations. Although the personality of a researcher cannot be extracted from the analysis itself this “does not imply that CDA is less scholarly than other research: standards of careful, rigorous and systematic analysis apply with equal force to CDA as to other approaches “(Fairclough and Wodak 1997:259). Therefore careful and thoughtful development of a working model for such research is a necessity.

The model suggested by Wodak (Wodak *et al* 1999) is also useful for this study. In the book “Discursive construction of the national identity” the scholar suggests a model of national identity discourse with spatial, temporal and thematic coordinates.

In terms of content of the communications she singles out several thematic domains related to national identity discourse that are applicable for the current research:

of othering - how *us* are defined in relation to *them*,
of the national past,
of the national present and future (in terms of common culture and politics),
of the national culture continuity and national body (again connected to the domain of othering).

According to Wodak the absence of some domains in the national identity discourse is significant in itself. For example, when analysing Austrian national identity she noted the absence of “us” (the Austrian person) in political commemoration speeches. She also highlighted the lack of discursive constructions in the domain of common culture and the national body, which showed partiality of the “discursive construction of common political present and future” (Wodak *et al* 1999:74). The significance of identifying absences in discourse, evident in Wodak’s work, highlights the closeness of

her research perspective to that of Foucault's discourse analysis. Wodak's classification of national identity discourses (discourses of othering, national past, national present and future, cultural continuity) is used in the dissertation to identify systematic links between identity discourse and new experiences of migrants.

3.6. DESIGNING THE WORKING MODEL

Discourses are inherently connected to language and interaction. It is necessary to decide exactly how the data is to be examined: firstly, whether the language used represents an object or a resource of the study, and secondly, whether the study concentrates on the process or a content of the interaction. In this dissertation, language is seen as a resource for the examination of wider social and cultural phenomena (identity negotiations) rather than as a topic of the study.

A second decision is concerned with the priority of content rather than the process of communication. When discussing separate interactions, a researcher reflects on how communication is conducted (e.g. questions of synchronous/asynchronous communication, strict sequences of questions/answers, and reactions of participants). But the analytical focus is placed on recurring elements of narratives, patterns of ideas/perceptions in the text – i.e. on the content of communication. Generalizations are made in terms of shared knowledge related to the native and host cultures and the common experiences of migrants.

3.7. WORKING MODEL

3.7.a. Making the object recognisable

Foucault holds that objects can range from the large-scaled (*madness*) to the more specific (*sexual abbreviation*). An object of knowledge does not necessarily emerge in discourse as a new phenomenon, but more often is re-contextualised and re-imagined. For example, although the objects of knowledge such as *nation*, *race* and *freedom* (identified by Fairclough, 1992) exist in contemporary political and media discourse

worldwide, each of them can mean different things in different countries, regions or regimes.

Surfaces of emergence, the social sphere where an object appears, represent an important part of object formation analysis. They encompass areas of initial differentiation and partial normalisation, and their examination enables a closer recognition of an object.

Sometimes an object comes to be expressed in a new surface of emergence. For example, Foucault shows that the new surface of emergence (penitentiary system) establishes links between madness and crime. The study argues that emigration, experiences of living in diaspora become the surface of emergence for the objects to be identified in this study.

This thesis attempts to establish those objects that are created by the migrants' identity discourse. The study accepts Foucault's assumption that an object does not represent a phenomenon on its own, but exists within the complexity of the exclusion/inclusion categorisation imposed by the discourse. Therefore the identified patterns of meaning are analysed here in connection with the discourse of othering on-line.

Procedure

In order to find discussions where the questions of national identity of migrants were discussed, a reference search for words connected with homeland solidarities¹⁶ was conducted through texts and messages of migrants' web forums¹⁷: *дом, народный, народ, ностальгия, ностальгический, отечественный, патриот, предки, родной, Россия, российский, русский, Союз, советский, (наша) страна*. In term of computer procedure, a simple word search was carried out through the whole corpus of texts of the chosen Forums using Key-words-in-context (KWIC) to identify the threads and messages where a key-word is used (as described in Stubbs 1996). The chosen

¹⁶ See this dissertation 1.5.a.

¹⁷ Sampling of web-sources is discussed in 3.8.b, 3.8.e. and 3.8d in more detail

discussions were broadly coded in a search for recurrent patterns of meanings. At this stage the words *английский, англики, Англия, Британия, демократический, запад, западный, Европа, европеец, европейский, культура, культурный, совок, цивилизация, цивилизованный* were added. The list of threads compiled as a result was sampled according to a sample frame (discussed later). Intense reading of the sample helped to identify key elements in these discussions and the sample was again searched for the patterns revealed. Broadly coding an electronic transcript of the chosen threads served as a starting point for an advanced search through the corpus of texts for the patterns identified.

The initial search for expressions of homeland solidarities showed that the identified threads often contained references to the West and Europe. It was established that the notions of Europe and the West were debated in connection with questions of civilisation and culture. At this stage it became evident that the notion of West (*Zapad*) was used in connection with, but semantically separated from, the concept of “Europe”. During the next stage, an extensive search for messages containing associations with Europe, Europeanism, EU etc was undertaken. As a result, the object of knowledge ‘Europeanism’ created by migrants’ discourse on-line established itself as a worthwhile subject for further analysis.

3.7.b. Describing the strategies

Describing the rules of discourse, Foucault suggests looking for points of disjunctions and incompatibility (for example, for objects of knowledge that cannot appear in the same series of statements). The scholar maintains that these points of differentiation might contain references to relationships and authorities as well as values (“positions of desire”) external to the discourse. Such rules of discursive practices develop into “link points of systematisation” (1972:66) and as such are examined as discursive strategies in this research, where strategies form “a principle of determination that permits or excludes, within a given discourse, a certain number of statements” (*ibid*: 67).

Analysis of strategies is essential in order to understand how the discourse creates new knowledge, how the authorities of delimitation act in the discourse, how knowledge acquires authority and the sense in which it embodies truth. It is also important to uncover the rules of inclusion/ exclusion to analyse both the kinds of argument used to support the object and those arguments that are excluded from the discourse. In this way, the practices of silencing and naturalisation are subjected to detailed examination in this dissertation.

Procedure

Once a number of discussions had been found during the pilot study, the following techniques were implemented. First, one of the discussions was examined in depth, and various perspectives of the concept of Europe was mapped. When specific semantic patterns and implicit statements were revealed in the context, the question was posed whether these patterns can be generalised.

After identifying particular discussions (as above), these threads were read in depth¹⁸. The conversations were approached as being unique and unfolding in a way the researcher was not attempting to predict. The above semantic patterns were then investigated in terms of discursive practices employed: the ways contributors put their arguments, appeal to authorities, self justify and identify, how they mark their solidarities. A special attention was devoted to identifying silences or absences (in terms of actors, relationships and, at a larger level, national identity domains) - that, according to Foucault and Wodak, signify unresolved problems - and to discursive practices of naturalisation of the object of knowledge.

Whilst Wodak focuses on dominant or mainland national identities, this study is concerned with the national identity of migrants and how it is modified due to emerging contacts with “others”. Therefore, this study pays special attention to the temporal and spatial dimensions of national identity. For example, to what extent and in which form

¹⁸ Due to the nature of the dynamic and ever growing nature of data (e.g. with possibilities of resuming a closed discussion) the sample had been constantly adjusted.

the “retardedness” of the diasporic identity, which has been noted by various researchers of the Russian Diaspora in the past¹⁹, can survive in the époque of instantaneous communications via the Internet?

3.7. c. Foucault -Lotman

Combining the methodologies of Foucault and Lotman, the working model attempts to analyse how the grids of specification that existed in the discourses within which migrants were socialised at their place of origin are “translated” (and thus modified) in their current communication.

The material is researched in terms of disjunctions between perceptions of host and native culture realities in order to trace hybridised forms of behaviour, choices, and attitude. This research procedures aim to question whether the objects of migrants’ discourse are homogeneous and fixed, or located at Lotman’s semiotic periphery.

Some forms of cultural translation defined by Lotman were investigated on the material of the study:

- a) Lotman suggested that strong and unexpected cultural contacts create a special situation in the semiotic periphery when perceptions and values of native and host cultures coexist there for a significant amount of time without much penetration and created a complex hierarchy (Lotman 2001:116).

Procedure: The texts were investigated to analyse if, when and why the participants use English rather than Russian language. A special attention was paid to the topics of discussions where foreign language inclusions occur. Then similar discussions (often with same participants) were analysed in order to trace any contradictive opinions expressed by the same personality. It was possible to conclude that members of the researched group of migrants demonstrated different attitude to similar events depending on whether these events were related to Russia or Britain²⁰, as if host and

¹⁹ See this dissertation 2.3.g. and 1.2.b.and 4.2.

²⁰ See 4.4.a and 4.1.

native culture discourses exist as parallel discursive domains in the productive periphery (Lotman) of the object of knowledge (Foucault).

- b) According to Lotman, another type of interaction between two cultural systems consists in penetration of a foreign system as a prestigious, new and advanced phenomenon: elements of a foreign culture catalyse cultural developments, but such dialogue between cultures does not necessarily cause deep structural changes. The scholar believes that foreign interpretations of status and prestige might penetrate the cultural system faster and easier if “dressed” in mutually recognizable and locally exchangeable markers – or, using terminology suggested by Foucault, if the discourse uses the same grids of specification and authorities of delimitation.

Procedure: During the close reading of threads it was noted that this type of cultural translation was widely expressed when migrants discuss their everyday culture (customs, leisure, time management etc) and consumer preferences. Messages containing such remarks were collected and then analysed²¹.

- c) According to Lotman, the situation of translation, “cultural dialogism” creates a dialectic symbiosis of both the internal and external cultures. Cultural translation goes in different directions with different speeds, and multiple codifications of symbols and ideas reflect the complexity of a cultural system (Lotman 2001:610). The scholar specified that new components are assessed separately by such system according to cultural “dominant codes” (pre-formed grids of specification, according to Foucault) and “meta-lingual” criteria (e.g. new experiences, practices, authorities – similar to Foucault’s surfaces of emergence).

Procedure: This type of cultural appropriation is exemplified by discussions about *справедливость*. In order to trace transformation of meanings, results of contemporary research of values in Russia are correlated with relevant extracts from the on-line discussions, while migrants’ discussions about individual rights and obligations in the host country are compared with their native culture perceptions (4.5.c.1 and 4.5.c.2).

²¹ 4.4.b.

- d) In order to deepen understanding of migrants' authorities of delimitations, a special strand of analysis was conducted within the chosen forums into the names contributors use in the discussions. The purpose was to analyse how authority is structured in a cultural dimension and to trace spatial and temporal domains of such authority. In order to analyse the process of cultural appropriation, a distinction between information field (new, non-codified influences) and field of reference (mutated elements which have been appropriated and live a life of their own) is made in this study. The separation of information field from field of reference is based on the theoretical semiotic works of Lotman, particularly on his article "*К построению теории взаимодействия культур*". The information field reflects recent experiences of participants, while the reference field is understood to consist of "appropriated", "habitualised" cultural data.

Justification of the method for the additional strand of research based on personal names from the subforums Культура

This strand of my study analyses names, used by contributors in their on-line communication. Such examination aims at reconstructing their cultural coordinates. This method that exists across disciplines but does not go under a universally accepted name. It admits to significant variations, both across disciplines and in individual studies.

In sociology this approach is used to identify in-group and out-group loyalties. Methodologically it is based on an assumption that individuals tend to identify themselves with symbols (including personal names) associated with achievements of which they are proud, whilst they cast aside connections to everything evoking the negative feelings of shame, anger etc (see Calhoun, 1994).

In psychology a similar approach is established under the name of cognitive mapping (Kitchin 1994). This method investigates the process of cognition through mental "landmarks" that assist the individual process of the acquisition, coding/decoding and storing of knowledge about the world. It is believed that symbols or images are used by

people (consciously or subconsciously) in order to structure, categorise or contextualise their cognitive tasks (Bruner1990)²².

Research within the disciplines of history and anthropology also acknowledges such methods. For example, the studies of “place-names” of native Indians highlight the role of native toponyms as ethical and historic allusions (Shore 1996, Nisbett 2003.). Gapova describes the creation of such cultural landmarks (renaming places, introducing new names) as a process of nation building in Belarus (Gapova, 2004). Ivanova, when studying the representations of France in Russian culture of the early nineteenth century through “the field of historic-cultural-geographic associations”, analyses private correspondence of the époque and attempts to “localise the notion of France on the imagined map of Europe” (Ivanova 2003:87). Porshneva attempts to correlate discourse analysis with the notion of “field of meanings” (*смысловое поле*) and points out the growing role of subjective accounts in sociological and historic studies (Porshneva 2003:30). Building on Wodak’s suggestion that names represent important references in temporal and spatial dimensions of the national identity discourse, an analysis of personal names used by migrants in the threads is employed in this study.

This method is also based on the works of Hexter and Lowenthal into the construction of historic narratives. The scholars highlight the importance of subjective interpretations of historic facts, because only these interpretations permit the formation of narrative from the multiplicity of facts. Lowenthal highlights the discursive importance of names. He writes that they provide clues as to the “islands” of stratified narratives in the “shapeless sea” of information (Lowenthal 1985:347). Hexter shows that quotations, comments and lists of names are essential for discursive purposes; he writes that such references represent an ingredient of the “dough” of historic discourses, rather than their “glazing” (Hexter 1971:390). Thus names represent an essential part of defining in/out group solidarities of migrants and reflect the process of othering essential for the identity discourse of the diaspora.

²² In cognitive and cultural psychology such data is connected to wider notions of mental models also referred to as “cultural scripts” and “frames of reference”.

In order to customise the chosen research method, a distinction has been drawn between the information field and the field of reference. The opinions voiced are not treated as expressions of individual taste, but rather as an embodiment of culturally appropriate or accepted meanings suitable for systematic recording and analysis. The names used by the contributors are linked to the way this group of people asserts its identity (intellectually, professionally, and culturally) and marks its social distinctions.

The information field reflects recent experiences of participants and consists of names in the discussions about recent events: movies seen, attractions visited, books read or suggested, i.e. new impressions, not yet reflected upon and re-imagined. In this research the information field shows the spectrum of cultural interests of migrants, and marks the directions of their identity negotiations, underlining the ongoing process of learning.

The reference field is understood to consist of appropriated, “habitualised” cultural data. In this case, when analysing the contextual meaning of quotations, names in the conversations need to be assessed, but a simple list of names would be insufficient material on which to base any assumption. The reference field contains names used in support of general comments or used as nicknames, as well as names of writers quoted with extracts from their written works and names of personalities alluded to by reference to their creations (e.g. Mona Lisa, The Master and Margarita).

Procedure

The sub-forums *Культура*, which exist in all the forums under investigation, were singled out to represent the first stage of sampling because the topics of these threads were a priori concerned with issues that the migrants themselves associate with culture. For example, cinema and music exist as special sub-forums where the discussion tends to focus on pop and rock music, the latest films etc., whereas the *Культура* sub-forums comprise opinions on classical music, opera, ballet, film and book classics as well as discussions on culture in general. These facts draw an initial distinction between high, “serious” and low, “entertaining” culture as perceived by the migrants themselves.

Discussions were then sampled according to the sample frame discussed earlier²³, whereby the content was examined for the use of personal names. The messages were literally mapped according to time and the country where the named personalities lived, the language or alphabet used by migrants (were these names provided in Russian or English) and the type of arguments the names contributed to the discussion.

At the same time these names were classified with regard to their role in the discussion. Some of the names provided new information: participants posted titles of recently read books, gave a brief description, told what they saw in theatres and museums. Sometimes the names represented an argument or a reference. Contributors appeal to the authority of a name and allude to some associations the name already possesses for the interlocutors.

The same name can be a source of new information in one discussion and a reference in another and, as this difference is of significant importance for this research, such occurrences of names will be counted separately (according to a classification dependent on the distinction between “the information field” and “the field of reference”).

3.7.d. Plan of research

The research was conducted in two stages.

- 1) Pilot stage. During this stage web-forums were chosen for investigation, and word search conducted according to the procedure described in 3.7.a. A discussion for detailed investigation was chosen and analysed. The results of the pilot stage can be found in 4.1.a
- 2) Experiment. Further investigation of the patterns revealed was conducted during the experiment. The results are analysed in 4.1 – 4.4 of this dissertation, and summarised in 4.5. and the Conclusion.

²³ 3.7.a.and 3.8.d.

Part 2

3.8. CHALLENGES OF THE MATERIAL: SAMPLING AND SPECIFICITY OF FORUMS

The Internet today is accepted as a legitimate source of information about societies, and technology in this study is best seen as a context in which communication takes place (Altheide 1996). There is a growing interest in and recognition of Forums as a valuable data for communicative, cultural and ethnographic research. Research methods for such studies are still under construction, including sampling frames, lists of sources, questions of content and data, reliability criteria. In this investigation questions relating to sampling of the material were not straightforward because similar studies do not exist. Such questions arise with reference to

- 1) choice of sources – which particular Forums to single out for the study (3.8.a, 3.8.b);
- 2) sampling of material (means of self-representation and corpus) (3.8.d and 3.9.);
- 3) categories of users (3.10);
- 4) the use/non use/ depth of use of metadata (links, attachments etc). (3.8e)

3.8.a Description of Material: Questions of Organisation and Management of Internet Forums

Communication via Forums is personal, yet to some extent anonymous and tends to focus on the topics of discussion (Lea, 1992). To the researcher, web-forums represent an anonymous yet public and thus ethically correct source of informal and authentic texts, covering a wide spectrum of topics. Communication in Forums combines the features of naturally occurring conversation, but exists in a written form; it evokes analogies to simultaneously mass and interpersonal communication: participants address their messages to each other, but at the same time they are aware that their words will be circulated among a large number of people. The latter as well the fact that such texts are placed in open access Internet forums makes the data public and socially significant. The interpersonal and at the same time public character of communication via the medium, non-linear constructions of the discussion interspersed with links to external sources, electronic references to other messages, and attachments, including

multimedia ones, represent unique features of the material. There also some differences how Forums are owned and managed in comparison to other mass media.

Ownership

Generally defined, an Internet forum is a type of media that provides virtual space for user generated content. In order to function, any Internet forum needs to have a provider and a server; therefore in general researched forums represent spaces for public discussions, located in somebody's virtual space²⁴.

The questions related to the ownership and owners' influences on public discussions in private domains are not yet fully researched and defined legally. The owner can close and open the web Forum, make changes to the layout and place advertisements there. Yet, due to the nature of the medium, his/her abilities to influence the content of communication are naturally limited: forums by definition are built up by voluntary public contributions. Participants launch discussions and keep them "alive" by adding new posts. Such discussion places do not exist separately from each other; there are possibilities to connect a discussion place with another one by electronic links. For example, when "the owner" attempted to sell Bratok.co.uk and then reopened it, the participants expressed mistrust to this "revived" virtual space, got in touch with each other and resumed communication via other web-Forums. The rights of an "owner" in terms of copyright are not legally defined, with a number of experts believing that web-places with active public participation should be equated with "public domains" in terms of copyright: on-line materials may be reproduced, quoted and distributed without permission of an owner, as if they were placed in a public domain.

Thus the owner's ability to prescribe the content of communication (outside of the aforementioned prerogatives) is significantly minimised comparing with traditional mediated communication. But the choice of advertisements, choice of rubrics (not topics and threads) and most importantly a type of moderation and moderators' appointments represent the owner's prerogatives.

²⁴ Which was demonstrated by the story of the Bratok and attempts to sell it on e-bay (see 3.8.a.).

Open access and registration

The chosen web-forums benefit from several web-design features that encourage consistency of images and allow archiving messages. The forums are searchable, they store databases of threads and participants' profiles, and are open for non-restricted visits of guests (both registered and non registered readers).

The researched web Forums demand user (member's) registration only from those who would like to contribute and write to the Forum. Members are identified by unique usernames and are able to edit their previous posts (they will be marked as edited), start new topics, and control their individual settings and profiles. It is accepted in the relevant literature (Smirnov 2005) that registration allows disclosing only the information which a participant feels necessary at some stage, but the registration itself encourages more responsible approach: promote trust and personal relationships; reduces spam and possibility of on-line insult. Although an individual keeps anonymity, his/her social and cultural personal characteristics may be reconstructed using the data accumulated at the Internet Forum²⁵.

Moderation and Code of Practice

The rules of behaviour on-line are conventionally prescribed by so-called netiquette, which represents a number of rules created and promoted by contributors to the Internet worldwide. Usually in addition to this, each Forum defines its own code of practice (rules of behaviour on-line for a particular forum). The code is compiled and monitored by moderators. Messages containing personal insults, or threats or race, national and religious hatred and propaganda, or commercial advertisements, or porno and violent content shall be deleted by moderators, while the senders are not allowed to continue communicating in the forum any more.

If the Forum is moderated, it means that a group of managers (these are usually unpaid positions) are able to delete a message, violating the code of practice accepted by the

²⁵ See 3.10

forum. For example, according to the codes of practice of Bratok and Russian London, questions, advice and information, should not endanger anybody's anonymity. Their moderators also delete messages breaching language norms (in particular those written in a non-Cyrillic alphabet or using swear words).

There are two types of moderation: pre-moderation and post-moderation. A pre-moderated forum has one or more managers who must approve articles before they the latter are posted at large. A separate address is used for the submission of posts, and moderators then propagate posts which are approved for the readership. Until then, the message will not appear on the entry.

Forums chosen for this study are not only open access virtual discussion places, but also practice post-moderation, which means that any post will be published (appear on-line), and moderators are able to delete a message only post-factum. They would also acknowledge the fact of censorship and provide the reasons for such a decision. Messages in breach of rules would be deleted directly from the sequence of messages on-line, with moderator's remark that the post was deleted and why: e.g. the sender broke a specific rule from the Code of practise. Participants would be aware of this fact. The decision of moderator may be disputed by participants in private or during public discussion.

The existence of moderators protects the communication from assaults of different type on the one hand, and on the other, it encourages self-censorship similar to traditional mass media participation. As any technological tool, moderation facility might be misused: on one side, it is essential to ensure that participants are protected against assaults, and on the other side, it contains hidden dangers to the freedom of communication. Moderators would have all technological means at hands to exceed their authority, and, for example, to make obstacles for an unwished individual to participate in the Forum. The signs of moderators' bad practice were traced in some sources²⁶.

²⁶ for example, <http://doska.co.uk/index.php?showtopic=6048>

In order to uncover possible misuse of power by moderators, the chosen threads were checked for any signs of deleted messages: references/electronic links of the first degree²⁷ to another threads or posts, as well as quotations from messages sent by “non-existed” (banned) participants. Parallel discussions in other forums were checked in order to see whether participants complain about misuse of power. Only discussions where moderators did not intervene (or when they did, but justified sufficiently their involvement) were singled out for the analysis.

Audience

Contributors to web-forums represent a large body of authors who simultaneously act as readers.²⁸ Another part of the audience is represented by a significant number of members who read forums without posting messages. The researched forums are open to a third group, the non-members (guests). The number of guests is higher than the number of active and silent members combined: according to statistics of entrees the ratio of guests to registered users and is 1.5:1.

3.8.b. Sampling the sources

The sampling of sources is carried out in four steps (described below) to comply with the analytical focus of the dissertation²⁹

- 1) First of all it is important to understand whether Forums represent an important part of communication within diaspora. The results of several Internet searches

²⁷ see 3.10.

²⁸ See also 2.2.c and 1.3.b

²⁹ The study is culturally specific, making a particular reference to Russian-speaking migrants, originating from the territory of the former USSR. It is concerned with potentially problematic and conflicting aspects of their identity as migrants in one particular country (Great Britain).

demonstrate that web communications are widely used by Russian-speaking migrants as a source of information and advice as well as a discussion space³⁰.

In order to check the full range of existing Forums and build up the most accurate and comprehensive account, a cross-referenced search using several search engines was conducted. The following table (see the next page) shows that the number of web-sites associated with migrants from the former USSR is significantly higher than the number of web-places created by migrants of other origin also widely represented in Europe (e.g. Polish, Pakistani, French-speaking Canadians).

Search results from www.searcheurope.com 08/05/05

The number of ethnic web-sites created by migrant communities or organisations in Europe (letters P-R)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Pakistani (3) | Quebecois (1) |
| • Palestinian (1) | |
| • Persian (1) | Romanian (12) |
| • Peruvian (1) | Romansch (4) |
| • Piemontese (0) | Russian (647) |
| • Polish (30) | |
| • Portugese (10) | |
| • Punjabi (2) | |

2) To ensure that this in-depth study is culturally and geographically specific to one particular diaspora (communities of migrants of the same origin in only one country), web-sites serving transnational networks of migrants of the same origin have been omitted, neither were computer mediated discussions with only restricted public access included.

³⁰ In selecting web-resources for this study, an initial step was to limit the material to primary accounts written in Russian in order to avoid misattribution.

A list of web-resources in Russian, serving the migrants from the former USSR staying in Britain at the time of writing, comprises a variety of the above mentioned types of “virtual places” and also contains the following web-sites:

Web-sites connected to traditional periodicals:

<http://www.russianuk.com>

<http://www.london-info.co.uk>

<http://www.hidepark.info>

Private web-forums with public access:

<http://www.bratok.co.uk>

<http://www.rupoint.co.uk>

<http://russianlondon.com> (<http://russianlondon.ru>)

<http://www.narod.org.uk>

<http://www.propaganda.org.uk>

Local/regional forums with public access:

<http://www.russianmanchester.com>

<http://www.scotlandrussiaforum.org>

<http://www.russiancambridge.com>

The above web-sites are essential for the creation of “general sense of we-ness” (Scannell 2000:12) among the migrants; they contribute towards linking migrants to each other. When selecting the media for this research, it was considered that, due to the concentration of Russian migrants in the London area, the “regional” websites either suffer from a lack of information material (directly articulated in the home page of Russian Manchester) or position themselves only as notice boards (Scotland Russia, Russian Cambridge). Also, some sites are limited to special-interest groups or to entertaining a close circle of friends (Living in London, narod.org.uk). All these web-sites are connected to the more “populated” forums via electronic links in the texts and,

for the purposes of this study, have been treated as a context rather than the source of data.

A number of web-sources in Russian are connected to different organisations working with migrants in Britain: diplomatic missions, cultural centres, shops, companies etc. The decision to exclude such sources for the purposes of this research was based on their being organized as “question and answer” sessions instead of meeting the above criteria. At the same time the researched media are not completely separated from the ignored sources because they are interconnected by electronic links.

As a result, this sampling step has defined criteria the Russian-language web-Forums serving the diaspora should meet in order to be used for this study. The criteria are established as follows:

first, the data needs to allow the participation of a “third party”, meaning that Forum should be open for guests to read and other participants to comment and join the discussion.

second, interconnections need to be “purpose-free” (not focused on pragmatic questions such as how to ship, buy, sell, arrange, organize etc. goods and ventures).

third, communication needs to be self-induced, meaning that discussion should not represent a part of a campaign, launched by the third party.

fourth, only Forums practising post-moderation can be included.

- 3) The final choice of sources was based on analysis of suitable forums in terms of their discussion activities³¹, rather than news content. Activity of a forum was rated with respect to an average number of responses per thread and the number of threads per

³¹ The study was restricted to the genre of discussions.

day. Cross-references to previous discussions within texts also proved the existence of an active audience.

Originally, forum Bratok.co.uk was singled out for the research. It had developed from a newsgroup into an Internet forum in spring 2002 and became popular among the Russian-speaking population of the UK with more than ten thousand registered users, more than twenty thousand topics of conversation and something under half a million messages searchable through the archive

With its steadily growing number of guests and members, settled in different places of the UK, it was the most influential Internet based medium for the community³². However the forum was put up for sale on 1 January 2005 and closed within a fortnight³³. For the purpose of this research the archive of the forum was copied using the program Internet Explorer. During 2005 the most active web-forums in the UK were www.rupoint.co.uk and www.russianlondon.ru. Thus the decision has been made to select the above three forums as meeting the criteria for this research.

3.8.c. Description of the material

The above web-forums are all-purpose discussion places. Communication via the forums is thematically structured and divided into sub-forums in the same way as rubrics or columns in traditional periodicals are, but these rubrics consist of separate topics or conversations called threads. The chosen forums have similar interfaces, briefly described in the following. The most populated sub-forum is “Разговорчики” where the “news” or fresh information is discussed. Sometimes the thread starts with a reference to an external source (article, TV program etc). There are also rubrics of general interest such as *Политика* and *Культура*. The topics from *Музыка*, *Все про*

³² Bratok was perceived by its audience to be a social and cultural phenomenon of the Diaspora. It was both criticized and praised by other migrants' media. After publication of a parody on Bratok in the magazine called Hyde Park, members of Bratok highlighted the role of the web-side in the Russian-speaking community: “...Лучше бы рассказали про сайт толково - сколько здесь всего - всякого и разного. Сайт -действительно явление в культурной жизни русской Англии.” (posted by participant with the nickname104).

³³ See attachment 1

кино are designed as separate sub-forums. Various sub-forums serve as a space for on-line consultation and advice: *Юридический, Immigration, Здоровье, Бизнес и финансы, Образование в УК*. The sub-forum *Работа* works as an intranet advertising job opportunities and vacancies. There are rubrics aimed at specific audiences: *Мы и наши дети. До 16 и старше, Знакомства, Дринки и тусовки*. Some sub-forums focus on the consumer preferences of the participants *Магазинчики и shopping, Винный погребок, Клуб путешественников, Автотранспорт, Спорт, Еда в УК*.

3.8.d. Defining the corpus

Taking into account that texts of the researched forums cannot be collected in a “whole” and fixed form, that the intensity of communication varies unpredictably and the audience at large cannot be documented, the study is mainly qualitative.

The basic assumption underlying the decisions about the corpus is that the topics that encourage the largest involvement in terms of visitors and responses have higher significance for the audience. With no similar studies available to provide guidelines, criteria have been established for this study based on:

number of replies,

number of “visits” and

time a thread has been “alive”.

The general sampling frame includes threads with over 100 answers/ messages/ contributions and over 700 visits of guests who read the thread without contributing. The minimum length of a conversation is set at one week to allow all of the regular participants to become involved in the discussion. It is important to be aware of the pitfalls of such a design: due to technical difficulties, excessively lengthy threads with a large number of replies do not encourage visitors to read the whole conversation. Another pitfall of a popular discussion becoming too long is that it tends to lose focus

and streams off into various directions. Therefore texts from discussions lasting longer than two months and with more than 300 participants were not considered as an entity, but divided into parts in order to analyse the topics of conversation. Thus, the purpose of the sample frame is to permit as wide range of topics as possible, to give a better insight into the whole range of migrants' concerns over identity negotiations, and to allow generalizations of the patterns revealed.

The above sampling frame was adjusted for the additional strand of the analysis in sub-forums *Культура*³⁴: discussions in these sub-forums are significantly shorter, so the frame was redesigned to cater for 30 participants and 100 visitors (where the information on visitors is available), the time limits set for the discussion being one week to one month. The sample from *Культура* was naturally smaller, as the texts belonged to a particular limited category. This sampling represented a specimen perspective³⁵ (ten Have 1999:50) which is often used in discourse analysis to examine patterns of meanings among similar rather than diverse data (Wetherell and Potter 1992, ten Have 1999).

Within both sampling frames (general as well as specimen as in *Культура*) the sampling was targeted by, as a preliminary, broadly coding the data in line with the material discussed in the chapter on the Russian national identity. The search was made through the corpus of texts to mark topics of conversation, and then enhanced using the search tools of the Forums to pin-point the patterns revealed. This decision allowed an insight into how apparently distant topics encouraged or provoked discussions of the key research issues.

3. 8.e. Sampling with regard to external links

Internet-located texts are interconnected and consumed in a specific way being connected electronically one to another. A researcher needs to reflect on how the

³⁴ See 3.7.a. and 4.2.b.

³⁵ This notion has been borrowed by discourse analysts (ten Have, *ibid*) from natural sciences to describe the stage of work when the search is focused on finding patterns within other patterns or similar samples.

electronic links provided in the texts influence the discussions, what kind of sources are quoted there and what is the impact of electronic “bypasses” on the discussions. The list below shows the resources that are linked to the researched Forums.

Links to sources

Russian-language media in Russia (press, news agencies, TV, radio)

Russian-language media in the world (news agencies)

British English-language media

British Russian-language media

Personal web-sites and blogs

Professional web-sites

Web-sites of organisations and institutions (embassies, museums etc.)

Role of e-links in the discussions

Starting discussion

Providing additional information

Referencing

Specifying or debating details

Only by following the links, it is possible to appreciate how authors and readers create their own “version” of the text.

A decision had to be made as to what degree links can be used in this study. It was physically impossible to investigate in depth how participants use links, and therefore only the first degree of depth (links quoted in the text) have been included in the data of this study.

3.9. SELF-REPRESENTATION ON-LINE

3.9.a. Means and facilities of self-representation on-line

Profile and Username

During the registration a new member fills in a special form (profile) where he or she has an option of disclosing their age (or birthday), interests, occupation, gender and current location. These profiles sometimes volunteer occupations and even job positions (*business development manager Еркуш* – МИШКА КВАКИН or *solicitor London* - LAWYER, or *driver* - VOLKALEH), but the majority use descriptive characteristics (e.g. *местонахождение – город-герой Лондон, интересы – корыстные, профессия - в зависимости от интересов* (ПРОВОД) or *менеджер домашнего очага и мира* (Bettsi). Other “real-life” related information is retrievable from the username and the place of registration.

Usually profile reflects a degree of trust and readiness to disclose one’s personal details at the time of registration: more information may become available directly from the posts. This information is usually consistent: during the communication, contributors disclose details of their lives, and this helps to gradually build up trust among them, as discussed earlier³⁶ (Miller and Slater 2000, Nip 2004).

Avatar

An image (avatar) can be chosen from a list of pictures or sourced by a member. Some members use real photos (for example, a participant called Carcass was represented by his portrait)³⁷, others used Soviet symbols (the participant nicknamed BOBA was represented by the Soviet flag) or symbols of their places of origin (the participant called Foreigner was represented by the Estonian flag). The choice of avatars proves, as was discussed in the chapter on identity, that virtual identities are not real or false but reflexive of reality.

Several participants communicated through their avatars their current location or their place of origin (for example, Alex Zander - a traffic sign with the name Sverdlovsk (the name of the biggest city in the Urals during the Soviet Union, now Ekaterinburg). The place of registration may be given as a city (Glasgow), a county (Sussex), a part of the

³⁶ See this dissertation 2.5.a. and 2.5.d.

³⁷ This image was discussed by his friends on-line who also knew him off-line.

city (London, Chelsea), or described as a euphemism (*на седьмом небе*). Some members from outside the UK disclose their place of registration (e.g. Toronto or USA), or use a web-option to inform that they intend to migrate (*not yet with you, на чемоданах*), or to state that they are somewhere far away (*менерь Кунтай*)³⁸. The majority of participants are based in London: when confirming this as their place of registration, they sometimes give details of where in the city they are based. A certain word play on toponyms may be observed here: *Suburbia* bears connotation with Siberia and suburbs at the same time (Polina); *дер. Пырловка, Эссекский край* (Gutalin); *Кардифицина* – (Andre 6b). Foreign toponyms may be used for the purpose of creating humorous effect; although in other cases they may be interpreted as an evidence of one's disappointment with provincial or rural localities in the host country (statistics shows that the current emigration from Russia is largely an urban phenomenon - Popkov 2003). The above observations signify the importance of real geographic locality as well as territorial solidarities for the Russian-speaking migrants. Similar observations are made by Smirnov (2005) who discusses avatars as a means of representation in the Russian-speaking on-line community in Germany.

Avatars are an indicative, but not permanent feature of self-presentation. At the time of writing it was technologically impossible to archive the avatars together with messages, neither it was possible to trace avatars post-factum. Therefore there has been a decision made in this dissertation to reduce the empirical material to solely textual means of self-representation on-line.

3.9.b. Description of the material: participants

The available information about the social and cultural backgrounds of contributors (which can be discerned from the profiles and avatars) is useful to appreciate the representativeness of the chosen Forums. This data leads to the conclusion that among the participants there are people of different social status, education, age and

³⁸ Web-forums catering for the Russian-speaking communication between communities in different countries are excluded from the research. However, due to the temporary character of migration, a number of participants to the communications under investigation could have been based outside Britain at the time of their posting.

upbringing and that the forums facilitate communication of people coming from a wide spectrum of social as well as geographical backgrounds.

The texts of messages as well as registration data allow the audience to be evaluated in terms of age, occupation, education and other social characteristics. Contributors to the discussion belong to different age groups. The youngest participants miss their parents (*только от родителей я получаю такое количество unconditional love*), look for schoolmates on the web, or discuss mood swings and wild parties.

- *I am looking for people who studied in... school in Kazan.*

- *Ищу из Казахстана, школа номер.*

A significant number of users were born in the 1960-70s. The fact that they usually state not only their birthday, but their year of birth in their profiles (which others do not) demonstrates that they are comfortable with their age within this community and signifies that people in their thirties-early fortieth represent the majority of participants. Some participants are older and describe their experiences of working in the USSR during the Gorbachev and Brezhnev years.

- *Да, должна с вами согласиться нет такой страны – Белоруссия. Есть республика Беларусь. Но вы на Вовика не злитесь, он старый, несмотря на бодрый стиль его постингов) и лет 50 с лишком он прожил именно в Белоруссии. (05-12-03)*

- *В мою недолгую бытность инспектором областного отдела Народных Депутатов (сто лет назад, еще при Советской власти) поехала я в командировку в отдаленный район Новгородской области...(01-10-03)*

- *...Да и дом мой здесь. Муж, двое детей....Хотя конечно люблю Москву до безумия. Правда места вспоминаются другие, наверное я постарше буду... (06.05.03)³⁹*

Genders are almost equally represented in the Internet forums. In 500 messages selected randomly from 7 sub-forums (207 participants in total) there were postings

³⁹ www. Bratok .co uk - not available on line since 2005

from 97 women and 110 men, with their activity in discussions being similarly proportionate. Since computer assisted communications are traditionally seen as a masculine environment (for example, McDonough, 1999), this fact suggests that the number of females among the migrants is greater than the number of males in the Russian-speaking diaspora.

The participants are representatives of the first generation of migrants, sharing their stories of migration and settlement, describing their past in the former USSR. Nobody disclosed him/herself to be second or third generation migrants.

As with other diasporas, the Russian-speaking on-line community is a highly polarised social space⁴⁰: experiences of middle-class professionals are discussed along with those of low-paid manual workers in the service sector and industry. On the one hand there are Internet messages from the so-called "trans-national class" (Papastergiadis, 2000), i.e. the professional elite.

- ...Директор банка со стажем хочет получить в Лондоне эксклюзивное образование по Banking and Investments. Не знаете ли вы, где это лучше сделать? Сразу оговорюсь, Лондонская Бизнес Скул такого курса не имеет. (posted 03-06-2003).

- ...Я вот хочу прокатиться от Лондона до Эдинбурга на Ориент экспресс, говорят это очень интересно, и ужин подают на серебре и шампанское (posted 24-08-02)

Assistance and advice on purchasing property in fashionable London areas and stories of luxury holidays are posted to the forum. Other people share their experiences of coping in less privileged situations: some threads contain information on how to buy a formal dress at a car boot sale, how to cheat with mobile phones, how to spend less on sending a parcel to relatives abroad, or how to find a room to share. The existence of illegal migration is also reflected in the web-discussions.

⁴⁰ See this dissertation 1.3.a.

Bratok, one of the researched web-forums, conducted 3 polls (*Who are you?* in 2002, *What are you doing in the UK?* in 2003 and *How do you earn your bread?* in 2004) in order to define its audience. The joint table summarising the results shows that a large number of contributors were students, although the proportion decreased from the first to the third poll, while the participation of professionals and individuals who came to the UK as a spouse of a British national was growing to about 60% (of whom 27% were in the commercial sector and 17% in the academic sector). Only 10% of the contributors acknowledged themselves to be manual workers.

The age dynamics based on the polls and personal profiles correlates with the occupation data and the share of participants in the 30-40 age bracket is growing.

| | Year of poll | | | |
|----------|--------------|-------|-------|---------|
| | Age 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | Average |
| under 20 | 9.26 | 6.73 | 13.55 | 10 |
| 20-30 | 58.33 | 49.04 | 45.76 | 52 |
| 30-40 | 28.70 | 36.54 | 37.28 | 31 |
| 40-50 | 3.5 | 6.73 | 3.38 | 4.4 |
| 50-60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table: results of the polls “How old are you?” (percentages)

As soon as participants feel “at home”⁴¹ in the forum they start telling their life stories or sometimes using their occupational or educational backgrounds to reinforce their arguments in the debates. For example, in the thread *Органик-Неорганик* one of the respondents described how they chemically tested vegetables,⁴² a graduate from the Moscow University launched a thread “МГУ фил-фак отзовитесь”⁴³. In the thread

⁴¹ See 2.5.a. and 2.5.b

⁴² <http://www.bratok.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-26080>

⁴³ <http://www.bratok.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-25310>

*Лингвистические конфузы*⁴⁴ one of the participants discloses that she works at the till in a small village shop. Several attempts to create professional communities of migrants within the forum Rupoint show that musicians, medical professionals, bankers and IT experts are represented in the migrant community: for example, *Программисты-шаг вперед*⁴⁵.

It is possible to observe on-line a high level of participation of Russian-speaking professionals resided in the UK. Even the logo of Bratok - the “Community of Mind” - directly highlights the tasks of intellectual search among migrants as well as a high value of knowledge for them. The question shall be asked how important this observation for the representativeness of the researched media is. As Bunt noted in his studies of the Muslim Internet, web-users represent in the Middle East “a minority, albeit a disproportionately influential one” (2003:3). Although communication on the Internet in this region is elitist in social terms, it is becoming a significant channel of information and a means of reinforcing or developing identities (2003:201). In the cultural context of the Russian-speaking Diaspora in the UK with the Internet being more and more accessible, on-line discussions have a wider participation and a growing influence on the Diaspora at large. At the same time, due to limitations on conducting social research on-line and a lack of reliable data on Russian migrants to Britain, it is impossible to correlate statistically on-line participation data with the composition of the Russian-speaking diaspora here. Therefore the decision was made that no sampling will be conducted with regard to social or physical characteristics of the participants.

3.10. THE PROBLEM OF CONTEXT AND DATA: explaining my sampling decisions

The above description of the medium and the material (together with the chapter on Migration and Russian-speaking Migration), provides the purposeful background for this study, defining the context of these communications (for example, in terms of social characteristics of the participants, their occupations, age and status). The above

⁴⁴ <http://www.bratok.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-26328>

⁴⁵ <http://www.bratok.co.uk/archive/index.php/f-1>

description also provides information about social, cultural and biological composition of the population to be taken into account during the research. For example, it is important to know that the high number of women taking part in on-line conversations does not represent a peculiarity of Russian-language forums, but rather reflects one of the trends of contemporary migration, namely the growing proportion of women among migrants globally.

A similar approach (to collect background information to accompany the discourse analysis) has been adopted by a number of research projects: for example, Mehan (1996) collected detailed background information to inform his discourse analysis; Jagger (1997) in his work on verbal and written communications in the government combined discourse analysis with an insight into the administrative system.

At the same time it is important to distinguish between context and data in any study. For example, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) noted that in ethnographic studies a number of research projects fail through assuming that all observations constitute a form of data. Weiss and Wodak underline the importance of consistency when using background information, stating that it is necessary to “integrate systematically all available background information into the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of the text” (Weiss and Wodak 2003:22).

The characteristics of the participants/audience in terms of the social, cultural and biological composition of the diaspora were assessed to provide a background to this research and to justify the sampling in terms of its representativeness and authenticity (see Scott 1990), but no further sampling amongst social and biological characteristics was needed. The most important aspect of data selection for this dissertation comprises decisions on the choice of media, on the use of metadata and on the sampling of Internet discussions⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ See 3.8.b., 3.8.d. and 3.8.e.

3.11. THE CHALLENGES OF CROSS-CULTURAL CATEGORISATION AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC USE OF MEDIA

The first challenge is related to the culturally specific use of a medium. Theoretical questions of nationally or culturally specific uses of the Internet are barely addressed in literature, although the ideas of the interplay of media technology with specific cultural and social conditions were noted by McLuhan more than 40 years ago. He famously described the preference for mail over the telephone in English culture as exactly the opposite to the preference of Russians. He speculated about possibilities of misunderstanding arising from the choice of a medium: “The English dislike telephones so much that they substitute numerous mail deliveries for it. The Russians use the telephone for status symbol (1964:214)”. In his studies of mass media consumption in Latin America Machin demonstrated that mass media preferences of individuals are significantly influenced by Spanish culture and the arbitrary way it associates one media (newspapers) with superior culture and formal knowledge in contrast with the other one (television) (Machin 2002:11). Machin believes that these preferences are to a large degree a reflection of major cultural rituals in sharing opinions within the community: people express opinions that would be welcomed in their circle. These opinions reflect a set of discursive practices accepted in a given culture. In-depth research into questions of culturally specific uses of media lies outside of the frame of this thesis, but the awareness of the ethnographic specificity of the material is important in conducting participant observations and in interpreting them at the stage of discourse analysis.

Another challenge emerges from the fact that the texts placed on-line are created in Russian but their meanings are presumably influenced by the English-language culture of the host country⁴⁷. Various scholars (Eagleton 2000, Williams 1976) refer to the difficulties in defining such multi-functional concepts as “civilization” and “culture” that have associations which can be traced back in various languages through different periods of history⁴⁸. In the case of interpreting a Russian-language discourse through

⁴⁷And will be interpreted in English

⁴⁸ See 4.1.b.

English, various researchers reflect on the difficulties in translating and interpreting the basic Russian cultural concepts “душа”, “тоска”, “личность”, “народность” (Offord 1998, Kelly and Volkov 1998, Perrie 1998), the semantics of which (as well as of others such as “правда” or “судьба”)⁴⁹ do not match their English dictionary equivalents. They reflect a variety of conceptualisations of individual, self and others, as well as emotional codes in different cultures.

Moreover, further challenges are created by the fact that the discussions are conducted between migrants who, whilst subjected to the influences of new (for them) host culture, use concepts provided by their native language. For example, when migrants discuss the concept of “culture” or use words such as “tradition” and “class”, is what they mean the same as an English native speaker would understand when reading these words in this dissertation?

At the level of communication, this problem is embedded in the system of ethical and cultural norms of society⁵⁰. In ethnographic, anthropological and cultural studies the question of social status is understood to be expressible explicitly to various degrees in different cultures. For instance, Karasik (2002) demonstrates that in British culture one’s status is more implicit than in contemporary Russian culture: “Indication of the life style in an English-speaking society is structured to allow less wealthy people not to feel deprived (*ущемленные*)” (2005:44). He compares, for example, the classification of railway carriages (*first* class and *standard* class) and believes that masking prosperity indicators may protect basic human rights and the dignity of those with low social status. At the same time, there are powerful traditions in Russian culture that compensate for the explicit language of social stratification – namely the

⁴⁹ See 2.3.a.

⁵⁰ The role of differences in semantic categorisations within different languages and the implications of these variations for interpretation are discussed within various disciplines: cultural studies, cognitive anthropology, psychology and socio-linguistics. A body of literature on cross-cultural aspects within these discipline is growing (e.g. Scollon and Scollon 2002, Bayley 2004, Blackledge 2005).

romantic attitude to suffering and religious asceticism, and praising the figure of a beggar or a pilgrim. Stites writes about the belief in the moral superiority of the poor in Russian culture (Stites, 1992:23) and argues that the sacralization of peasants' symbolic practices constituted the base for Soviet rituals. Rancour-Laferriere (1995) argues that the sacralization of sufferings represents the basic semantic construct of the word "narod". Elaborating on Stites, Ries also notes the trope of litany which is highly typical for public and private conversations in Russia⁵¹ (Ries 1997:162) and allows various levels of identifications to be utilised (e.g. *Мы рабочие* or *мы, жертвы Чернобыля*). The use of synecdoche (Dundes 1972, Bourdieu 1977:167), which generalises personal stories to the level of myth or saga, is also often observed in the conversations in Russian. Such cultural stances (Reis 1997:166) or dispositions (Bourdieu 1977:214) are embedded in the researched data and represent another group of challenges for the cross-cultural categorisation.

Other difficulties in the unfolding of meanings during a cross-cultural discourse analysis are connected to styles and registers of texts. For example Wierzbicka writes about the tendency in Russian culture "to make absolute moral judgements", "to link moral judgements with emotions", to place "cultural emphasis on absolutes and higher values" (1997:4). The style of the posts in Russian language web-forums is characterised by short, ironic messages, balancing on the edge of norms of politeness. At the same time participants often use imperatives or words like *совершенно, абсолютно, ужасно, идиотизм*, which in translation or in the process of interpretation during discourse analysis will create an impression of "categorical overstatement" (Wierzbicka 1997:12). Should these features be interpreted either as an insult, or an attempt to initiate friendly interaction, or a sign of anger, or do they signify the rough social environment of the migrants? These questions need to be discussed both through the prism of the norms of politeness and formal/informal communication as well as considering whether the forms of negotiability are the same in Russian and British communication. It has been noted, for example by Wierzbicka, that the Russian language encourages "direct", sharp, undiluted value judgements, whereas the Anglo

⁵¹ See this dissertation 4.5.

culture does not (*ibid*). Different languages introduce their own culturally specific perspectives: “Language... is the best evidence of the reality of “culture”, in the sense of a historically transmitted system of “conceptions” and “attitudes” (Wierzbicka 1997:21), through “a whole network of cultural scripts” (*ibid*: 17). Although the Russian-language statements when translated into English encourage speculation about the over-judgmental character of the texts, they may however be interpreted merely as a reflection of the traditional way of communication, defined by the cultural norms of the place of origin.

The general approach of this dissertation holds that migrants’ discourses are articulated through specific linguistic means (Russian language), are embedded within the national tradition of public and interpersonal communications, but at the same time are subjected to influences of the host culture. The “cultural scripts” interfere with the meanings that a marginal person (migrant) invests in their account of the host country experiences, and this study acknowledges that migrants’ discourses are “saturated”⁵² by foreign (host country) influences. Without entering the debate on the degree of such influence on the way people think, this phenomenon creates another layer of interpretation that the researcher is aware of.

3.12. PRESENTATION

When choosing to analyse a large corpus of data the researcher meets certain challenges in connection with the presentation of the data. The most explicit approach is to present the data in full and work through the analysis to demonstrate how the material has been interpreted. Similar approach is conventionally accepted in conversation analysis and invests such research with reliability. However from a practical point of view only a limited quantity of the data can be submitted in this way, creating the theoretical implication that if the concept of the research is only confined to the presented data, there can be no justification for generalising the conclusions.

⁵² See 2.2.b.

Another way of presenting the material is to provide summaries of narratives and illustrate them with short quotations. This way of presenting material is open to criticism as being less explicit in terms of insight into the process of the analysis, and a second difficulty is that the features that appear across a large body of text may not be visible or lose/gain potency when taken out of context. A final point is that, since the data of web-texts is too rich and cannot be exhausted by discourse analysis, it is open for further analysis which may distract from the point which it is intended to illustrate.

In this research a combination of both approaches has been attempted. The patterns revealed are discussed in detail and illustrated by examples from the texts, either without comment or supported by references to contextual information.

CHAPTER 4

4.1. WHAT DOES *EUROPEAN* MEAN FOR RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MIGRANTS? (ANALYSIS OF THE ON-LINE DISCUSSION “ARE THE GERMANS RIGHT”- A pilot stage of the project)

During the pilot stage of the project several discussions were chosen on the basis of the sampling as described in 3.7. The threads were read in depth and searched for patterns of opinions and arguments reflecting migrants' identity negotiations in order to uncover the systematic links between migrants' diasporic solidarities and their new experiences. Thematic domains of national identity discourse, singled out by Wodak (3.5.b) were used to structure investigation at this stage. Following the chosen on-line discussions, it was possible to point out references to participants' national history, their present allegiances, understanding of national culture, and their strategies of inclusion and exclusion. Spatial and temporal coordinates of these domains are also taken into account given the fact that the researched population is marginal to several (at least two) national identity discourses. By making implicit meanings explicit, the pilot stage 1) justifies further generalisations of migrants' shared knowledge and 2) opens up the discussion of what object of knowledge (3.7a and 3.3a) is created by participants and in which way new experiences are appropriated and interfere with pre-formed grids of specification (3.4c and 3.7.c).

The thread “Are the Germans right?” was one of those used (read, coded and analysed) during the pilot stage. The following detailed description of it exemplifies the above described investigation. While there have not been any discussions that intentionally address the topic of Russia, Europe and the West in terms of belonging and national identity of the participants, the discussion “Are the Germans right?” is typical of one where these issues emerge out of a relatively distant topic without any special encouragement. This thread discusses an article in the Financial Times of 10 April 2004 about a law passed by the parliament of Baden-Wurttemberg that banned the wearing of Muslim headscarves by teachers in state schools. The discussion was lengthy with a significant number of participants. It took place over a month, from 11 April 2004 to 11 May 2004, and contained 292 posts.

The discussion was launched on 11 April 2004 when a participant called lana_h posted a question “Are the Germans right?” to the forum Rupoint and provided a link to the aforementioned article. Instantly the first reply (p1)¹ welcomes the parliament’s decision:

Ну наконец-то! Давно пора. Хоть какое-то уважение к европейской культуре.

The post connects the question of minority dress with the concept of Europeanism. The custom of wearing unusual clothes is seen by the participant as a lack of respect for what the Russian migrant perceives as European culture. This message is dramatized by exclamations (*Ну наконец-то!*) and emotional expression (*Хоть какое-то...*) creating the impression that this decision is exactly what the participant had been waiting for and that this law could have direct personal impact.

The same reply connects the new German law with the situation in Great Britain thus marking the discursive domain of common political present (Wodak, 1999:74)². The post asks when the same measures will be implemented in the UK, and this country is referred to as *у нас*, “at our place”. The participant self-identifies with the native population of the country of residence:

Интересно когда у нас это произойдет?? [In on-line syntax, a double question mark at the end of a question signifies additional emotion]

While self-identifying with the host population, the participant does not question British vs. continental European cultural dilemmas but ascribes a certain “European identity” to the British people. Finally this person highlights the importance of traditions for European culture, proudly stating that they have always been essential for British culture in particular:

И это в стране, где традиции всегда свято почитались.

¹ Posts are subsequently denoted by letter “p” and a number. Misprints and mistakes in the website quotations are corrected by me, while the originals of these messages can be found in the Appendix.

² 3.5.b.

The word “traditions” (in plural) should not be interpreted as solely referring to the questions of dress and appearance raised by the discussion topic. The Russian-speaking migrant refers to British “traditions” and their importance to the local people, but makes this assertion based on generalisation (*всегда*) rather than individual experience. It is worth noting the use of a typically Russian bookish expression of elevated register (*свято почитались*). It is possible to speculate that “traditions” as cultural phenomena are personally important to the participant, and he refers to the importance of “traditions” in contemporary public discourse in Russia (see Billington 2003). However, an important caveat is that the concept of “traditions” might have a different meaning in Russian compared with English. Williams notes that “tradition survives in English as a description of general process of handing down, but there is a very strong and often predominant sense of this entailing respect and duty” (Williams 1983:319), while in Russian the word tradition is more associated with “values” and “customs” (Novyi Slovar’ Russkogo Iazyka 2000) rather than obligations. Kopnina adds to the discussion by claiming that cultural traditions were perceived by her Russian informants as “an artefact in a historical museum [...] viewed under the glass, taken out of context” (Kopnina 2005:162)³.

At this initial stage of the discussion it is not possible to establish whether the participant praises “traditions” as conceptualised in British culture or as implied in the culturally specific interpretation of Russia or the Soviet Union, nor can the meaning of “traditions” in a European context be deduced. But the reference to “traditions” from the beginning of the discussion introduces another domain of national identity discourse – the one, which is defined by Wodak as the discourse of the national culture continuity. Although the connection between the cultural identity and Europeanism is established in the very first reply, this topic is not enlarged on at this point but unfolds later in the thread.

³ For more about research of Kopnina – 1.5.d.

P4 questions whether one should equate European culture with a Christian one and associate religious affiliations with national identity.

Нужно ли непременно ассоциировать национальную (гражданскую) принадлежность с религиозной?

This question deciphers the notion of “national” as being civic, affiliating with a certain country, rather than ethnic and/or religious. This interpretation is shared by the common culture of participants, because (as discussed in the Chapter on Russian identity) the term “Russian identity” is ambiguous, bearing connotations to ethnic, civic and linguistic unities and divisions⁴.

The religious aspect of the discussion is the most contradictory one. Socialized under the conditions of the USSR, where communist ideology represented the major frame of reference, participants feel unprepared to reflect on their own ethnic or religious differences. Further in the thread participants share the opinion that the re-introduction of Orthodox services in the Russian army nowadays contradicts the principle of faith equality, but a little earlier in the discussion, contributors supported the idea that Christianity should be accepted as the “main religion” in Europe: a discussant (p12) refers to Catholic teachers who are allowed to wear their vestments at school and welcomes what the participant believes is discrimination in favour of Christianity. In this way the discussion shows the dualism of their attitude to religious freedom in the territory of the former USSR as compared to Europe where they stay now.

Они должны знать, что в этой стране основная религия – христианство.

Christianity is categorically described in the above message as “the main religion in this country”. This post marks one more dimension of the national identity discourse

⁴ It will be shown later (4.3.) that although contributors to the discussion do not necessarily identify themselves as ethnic Russians, their on-line community is based on their shared memories and experiences of life in the USSR, their country of origin. Participants are united online by their common language and become confused when they are asked to discuss their religious divisions.

– the one of othering: how the lines of exclusion and inclusion are discoursed by participants.

Again, as in p1, the participant's opinion is that his/her personal views are also those of the host population and a priori the native population of Europe. Non-Christian migrants to Europe are categorized in the statement above as “they” (*они*), used with the expression of necessity “must” (*должны*).

Further messages develop the idea that religion and culture are patterned with a definite geographical space and are entitled to special privileges there. For example, p5 establishes the priority of native traditions on the territory. The participant quotes the proverb:

When in Rome do as romans [sic] do.

The senders of p5 to p8 and p12 to p15 agree that peoples traditionally living in a certain territory (described in these posts as owners, masters of the house) are entitled to feel “at home” and keep up the traditional way of life. The participants compare a country to a household that belongs to its rightful owners or occupiers, and believe that newcomers should change their way of life in order to integrate.

...если Вы кого-то приглашаете к себе в дом, то Вы ожидаете от гостей уважения и принятия правил поведения, обычаев и т.д. принятых в Вашем доме. (p7)

...есть менее толерантные хозяева... (p8)

Native territory in the discussion emerges as basic, generic and indisputable – but, being an imprecise geographical concept, it leads to the belief in the nourishment of the culture and the application of privileges to one type of tradition and belief over others. It is possible to argue that this prioritization of the territorial dimension of identity is connected to the inherent value of “land” as defined historically in the concept of the Russian national identity.

During the discussion the participants highlight their understanding of Europeanism as being associated with a democratic way of governance (p6). Democracy as an

important feature of their national present ⁵ is highly appreciated by participants who discuss it through the aforementioned aspects: cultural and territorial.

First of all, their reading of democracy emphasizes the superiority of such public order over others, and the most importantly - associates this system of relationships exclusively with Europe:

СтОут ли европейцам равняться на Дюбаи?

Then p8 adds another argument in this vein, describing European countries as historically “enlightened”, educated:

...нужно ли на них равняться "просвещенным" странам?

Later p14 and p15 define a European society in terms of laws and civic compromise:

И если говорить о том, что мультикультурное общество - несбыточная идиллия, то какой же компромисс можно найти, чтобы избежать постоянной угрозы кровопролития на религиозно-национальной основе, как в Косово?... (p14)

and priority of civic responsibilities over religious divisions:

...раз есть закон страны, значит мусульманам следует выполнять его и быть достойными гражданами этой страны. (p15)

Thus the first day of the discussion marks several understandings of Europeanism by Russian migrants to Britain. The discussion mark several thematic domains related to national identity discourse as defined by Wodak. Contributors address questions of the national present by identifying themselves with the native population of the UK; provide arguments referring to the host system of values (as it is imagined by participants). The participants approach the issue of the national cultural continuity by discoursing ideas of British and European cultural, religious and political traditions. This conversation “speaks into existence” an alleged Europeanism of the Russian-speaking migrants as an object of their knowledge (3.3.b and 3.7.a.of this dissertation). In the migrants’ opinion, traditions (both British and Russian) are embedded within a certain territory. Territory is roughly described as “European

⁵ 3.5.b.

countries” without naming or distinguishing between them. The first day of discussion also allows an insight into the domain of othering. Migrants self-identify with the native British population and define “them” as non-Europeans. At this stage it is not clear whether participants refer to Europeanism of those Russian-speakers who stay in the Western countries, or they extrapolate Europeanism to Russian culture in general.

II

At the end of the first day of the thread Russia was mentioned in the discussion for the first time (p15). The discussant compares dress fetishism and the new German law with the eighteenth century Petrine reforms when Peter the Great obliged the nobles to shave as a part of his policy to westernise Russia.

Похоже на те времена, когда Петр I заставлял русских бояр брить бороды.

Therefore the thematic domain of the national past emerges with regard to the native country of participants. This introduction of a link topic to Russia creates another perspective in the discussion and the conversation focuses on Russian realities. References to Russia (the USSR) in the thread are not limited to the issues of the national past, but connected to the national present of migrants. The participants extrapolate the situation of the Russian-speaking minorities in the former Soviet republics to the ethnic minorities in Europe and question the difference in their own attitude towards them. The participants speculate about the situation of the Russian-speakers in Kazakhstan in connection with the above questions. Later on the discussion will confront the issues of the Russian (Russian-speaking) population of Estonia, the patterns of their integration or alleged non-integration and their self-estrangement from the native communities.

At the same time participants connect their negotiations of the national present (3.5.b) to the questions of the othering, and link both to the idea of Europeanism. Referring to the necessity of “integration” of non-Europeans in Europe discussed earlier, p26 asks whether Russians living in Kazakhstan should also alter their cultural belonging. The participant chooses religious criteria (to switch to Islam and stop wearing

crosses) and the language (stop speaking Russian) to define what he/she understands as grids of Europeanism as an object of knowledge.

Рассмотрим пример, например, Казахстана. Русского населения - дофига, а ассимилироваться не хотят, не обращаются толпами в Ислам, не хотят учить местный язык..... Запретить им носить кресты на шее и говорить по-русски?

This turn of discussion complicates migrants' understanding of national cultural continuity and political present. During the previous day, the participants praise the politics of accepting local habits and traditions in the case of emigration to Europe, but, when focusing on the situation of Russian speakers in the former USSR, discussants appreciate the relativism of their nativist arguments. Up to this point, participants were making arguments accepting the mainstream perspective of the discussion as being that of the native majority, which allegedly expects the total assimilation of migrants. But the contemporary examples of Russian-speaking populations being a minority in other countries lead to an appreciation of minorities' counter-narratives.

The following messages underline the constant contest between the life-styles in the contemporary world, reinforced by the mobility of the population in the 21st century and the multinational character of any contemporary society. Responding to the earlier quoted post "*When in Rome do as Romans do*", p27 argues that this is an old-fashioned formula and should be amended to:

Ну-у-у-у, это устаревшая форма. Современный вариант звучит When in Rome do as Romanians do.

This point seems to come at a crucial stage of the discussion: the topic of Russians as minorities in the former USSR republics might be expected to expand into a debate on the integration problems of the Russian-speaking population in Britain. But the participants steered away from this conversation: they chose to discuss migrants from other regions or the situation of Russian populations elsewhere than the UK. Contributors to this discussion do not include themselves in the category of strangers in their host country and do not correlate the situation of the Russian migrants in Europe with that of migrants of other origin.

The position of Russian-speaking migrants in the host country, their own experiences as “strangers”, the contradictions between Russian national traditions and the customs of the host country are rarely spoken of and therefore can be interpreted as Foucauldian silences in the discourse (3.3.c.2.). Participants refuse to acknowledge their own minority status in the new country of residence and “silence” any issues related to their own acceptance by the new society. These areas of absences prove that the identity discourse of migrants constructs shared knowledge, conceptualising their position in the new country of residence as rightful.

Instead of discussing aforementioned issues the participants again concentrate on various dimensions of their understanding of Europeanism. P29 defines European identity as the self-perception of being European and included in the society where they live. The discussants associate themselves with the native population of the host country. *A priori* assuming that Russian-speaking migrants possess this European identity while migrants of other origins do not, the sender of p29 divides the population of the continent into Europeans and “Arabs and the rest” (*арабы и прочие*). The participant tries to convince the audience that this is not an intentionally religious or ethnic division, but it is based on the reality observations that migrants of “other “origins do not want to integrate, and their communities are separated from the host society and secluded.

...Не чувствуют [себя] ни немцами, ни французами, ни бельгийцами, ни англичанами. А арабами, марокканцами, алжирцами и т.д.

Дело не столько в религии, сколько в том, что они упорно не хотят становиться частью социума, в котором живут, делая для этого все, что могут. Религия - только один из способов побольше досадить ненавистным (ведь никто из форумчан, даже Миррор [this a nickname], не думает, что живущие в Европе арабы и прочие хорошо относятся к европейцам?).

З.Б.⁶ Я понимаю, говорю о большинстве, не надо приводить примеры типа "вот у меня есть сосед араб, так он себя англичанином называет, вывесил у себя во дворе Union Jack и каждое утро поет God Save the Queen".

⁶ P.S.

The idea of Europeanism in these posts is understood to be non-ethnic, based on civic solidarity and symbolised by the British Union Jack flag and National Anthem, however it is illustrated by using ethnonyms (Arabs, Algerians, and Moroccans). It is then claimed that the ethnically non-European migrants hate those ethnic groups that are native to Europe. The participant generalises (*говорю о большинстве*) these people (“Arabs and the rest”) as others (*они*). He does not believe that theological issues are the cause of this divide, but rather claims that people of non-Christian faiths use their religion as a pretext to exempt themselves from the civic community and withdraw from communication with “Europeans”.

The discussion that follows speculates about the importance of primordial ethnic features in connection with self-identification as European. P31 claims that it is not only Arabs, but also Jews born in Europe, Chinese people living here, Bulgarians and Czechs (Russians are not mentioned again among migrants – silenced according to Foucault⁷) who do not identify themselves with Europe or their country of residence.

Чего вы прицепились к арабам и мусульманам? Что, других примеров нет? Можно подумать, что живущие в Европе веками евреи считают себя европейцами. Ага, щас. Живущие здесь китайцы тоже не считают себя англичанами. Китаец он и есть китаец, как ни крути. Британцы, да. По гражданству. А стать англичанами из чеха там или из болгарина - не смешите меня.

Participants try to focus on the question of integration/non-integration and speculate about the ill-will of “some” migrants, but distinguish between groups of migrants on the basis of their ethnic and racial features. Europeanism is defined in terms of a nativist essence, because civic values and cultural traditions are discussed as innate features of ethnic groups. These posts show that ethnic, regional and religious identities are not distinguished in these arguments: the participants use *Algerians* or *French* along with *Europeans*, *Arabs*, and *Muslims*.

Assuming that there are migrants’ communities that “do not want to integrate”, Ludic, an active participant (portrayed by a realistic portrait of a Russian lady dancing with a

⁷ 3.3.c.2.

traditional scarf as her avatar) believes (p43) that states should implement policies of assimilation. Her opinion is that “young active people need communication with a society outside of their [ethnic] community” (*общение с обществом вне общины*), at the same time describing them as being embittered and having an inferiority complex:

...находясь в закрытой и отличающейся от основного населения общине, делает людей неудовлетворенными, придает им чувство "я здесь временно, я здесь чужой, меня не воспринимают серьезно и т.д", что на подсознательном уровне выливается в комплекс неполноценности и озлобленность, поиски виноватых (себя же винить никто не будет). Особенно это заметно у молодых, активных людей, нуждающихся в общении с обществом вне общины.

Ludic speculates that the process of learning local traditions is complicated within secluded ethnic (non-Russian, and “non-European”) communities, and, according to the post, young active people are often surrounded by non-educated and not very clever people in their ethnic communities, and they are literally hiding away from society under hijabs because of their low self-esteem:

... как, должно быть, трудно тем, кто окружен диктатурой часто не самых умных и образованных членов закрытой общины - тут от неуверенности в себе под черное покрывало с сантиметровой прорезью для глаз спрячешься.

This image that she portrays is of ethnic communities being self-isolated groupings, managed by uneducated, “uncultured” people. This image would justify for her a state assimilation program “for the sake of minority communities” even if they express no need for it themselves.

А как надо бы проводить ассимиляционную политику? Думаю, что проводить ее как-то надо для блага же меньшинств.

Thus, the above part of the thread discussed the questions of othering. Thematically it was discussed with regard to questions of separation and integration, exclusion and inclusion, native population and ethnic minorities, rules of community living etc. The above divisions were again constructed along the lines of a discursively constructed object of knowledge - “Europeanism”. Participants refer to Europeanism as a shared knowledge, but the borders of this object are shifting depending on the question under discussion and are vaguely defined temporally and geographically.

III

Europeanism as an object of knowledge was tightly connected with the process of othering along the whole thread. Rather than determining the content of notions of Europeanism, participants define European culture by “purifying” it from what they believe are non-European components. Non-Europeanism becomes the criterion of the Other, and although Russian-speaking participants refer to social and political aspects, these features are described in connection with ethnicity and culture of the Other⁸.

A major part of the discussion about Europeanism concerns the migrants’ point of view of what is “not European” and is structured along the aforementioned lines: cultural differences and territorial identities. Russian-speaking participants continue declaring the priority of local rules and traditions as a predicament of territory, rather than society:

Когда я на Ближнем Востоке или Северной или Западной Африке. Я не ношу шлепанцев и не ношу шорт и не одеваю майки с открытыми руками. Т.е. я следую и уважаю обычаи и порядки страны где я нахожусь. Почему приехавшие в Европу иммигранты не могут поступать так же ? Если они не уважают нас, то как можно уважать их ? (p 146)

The word *уважать*⁹ (“to respect”) defines the author’s attitude to the customs and norms/rules of the country. The same word is used in connection with the relationship between the local population and migrants. Migrants believe that “native” traditions should be protected by law, while strangers should imitate the local way of life with a good will. This post also shows that, when discussing migrants of other origins, participants again self-identify with the population of the host countries. In p146 the author exempts himself from the notion of “immigrants into Europe”, and refers to Middle Eastern migrants as “them”, and the local population as “us”.

Unfolding the dilemma between “us” and “them”, Russian-speaking participants construct it as the contrast between what they perceive as local (British, European)

⁸ The process of “othering” as it is reflected in the researched forums is discussed in this thesis in 4.4.

⁹ *уважать* also means *to comply with*, to do a favor for somebody.

and Eastern (first of all Muslim) norms of life and dress code. Discussing Muslim migrants, contributors to the Russian-speaking forum incriminate them with social dependency, abusing the welfare system, self-isolation from the host society, lacking any attempt to integrate in or imitate the “European” way of life and even dangerous driving:

...мусульмане возводят форму одежды в степень чего-то незыблемого и священного. И это в светском-то государстве! И в общем-то, как выясняется, для многих мусульман, в чужом государстве! (p144)

- в континентальной Европе, а точнее в Бельгии, Голландии, Люксембурге, Франции и Германии большая часть арабско-марроканского населения принципиально не работает, а сидит на социальной помощи. (p77)

P3, p10 and p11 refer to migrants of Middle East origin using pejoratives and encouraging discrimination.

*Им еще и зарплату не мешало бы урезать...!!! Муслимы *****... :D*

While the discussion takes a distinctive anti-Muslim turn, the religious parameters of the opposition are not even mentioned, the discussion containing no arguments against Islam itself. On the contrary, there are posts declaring respect to “any religion” (*любую религию*):

Уважаю любую религию как таковую. Стараюсь не делать поспешных выводов за недостатком оснований - в данном случае знаю и плохих и хороших представителей ЛЮБОЙ религии. (p88)

Это как в пословице - У СТРАХА ГЛАЗА ВЕЛИКИ: Просто у Антонтони [a nickname of a participant] сейчас аллергия и отторжение против любого вида надписи или текста, содержащее слово: "Аллах" (p65)

Participants demonstrate ignorance of theoretical questions of Islam, mistakenly declaring Sikhs to be Muslims and equating nationality and faith. (e.g. *Мусульманство как религия ЯВЛЯЕТСЯ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОСТЬЮ. А это особенность ТОЛЬКО ислама.*)

They argue (p158 and p159) that a definitive criterion for religious “neutrality” be established through legislative and executive power:

"Накипело" - это вполне понятно, - на обыденном, эмоциональном и обывательском уровне. Нужно ли это "накипело" официальным лицам

переводить в популистские запретительные, а тем более дискриминационные, меры - совсем другой вопрос (p159).

Participants contextualise their anti-Arab sentiments as being highlighted by their fear of terrorism and attach the blame for this to an aggressive sector of the Muslim community. Specifying that they do not have anything personal against a Muslim discussant, they stress that their on-line Muslim friends do not “define the character of Islam in Britain” which members of Rupoint assume is determined by “extreme Imams and ideologues of terrorism”. This post also discloses that there is a number of people on-line that do not share anti-Muslim sentiments:

Предваряя гнев многих сразу скажу - не о всех мусульманах речь, но так получается пока, что самые активные религиозные экстремисты в сегодняшнем мире именно мусульмане. Против этого спорить бесполезно, как мне представляется. Конечно, случаи одиозного и зачастую криминального поведения представителей исламских диаспор не могут не тревожить. (p96)

- Увы, Миррор, речь не о Вас и Вам подобных. Вас много, но не Вы определяете лицо мусульманского сообщества Великобритании. Речь шла о том, что Великобритания является убежищем для самых радикальных и откровенно экстремистски настроенных имамов, мулл и прочих идеологов терроризма. (p118)

It is notable that these messages do not specify any source of information upon which judgments are based, but generalize them to reach the conclusion that “the most active religious extremists in the contemporary world are Muslims”. Participants construct individual opinions as shared knowledge about the image of the “other” and use expressions such as “it is pointless to dispute it”¹⁰. Some phrases are constructed out of the ritual texts of the Soviet period (*Великобритания является убежищем для самых радикальных и откровенно экстремистски...; играть близоруко на популистских настроениях*). Such features were labelled as “totalitarian residue” in contemporary Russian (Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade 1999:326). The above points out that the Soviet identity discourse, experiences of socialisation in the Soviet Union and narratives learned there and then, might be considered among the grids of specification of Europeanism (as an object of knowledge created by migrants’ identity discourse).

¹⁰ In greater detail discursive practices of othering are discussed in 4.4.b.1

IV

Europeanism is imagined by participants through the concepts of culture and civilisation (*культура, цивилизация*). Towards the end of the thread under investigation, cultural divisions are highlighted as summarising the ideas of Europeanism. Cultural divisions are drawn along national and ethnic lines. Several messages define European as incorporating Russian migrants and embracing Russians in general and the Russian culture, and contrast this with the culture and traditions of Arabs, defining them as non-European:

И у русских и у арабов есть свои культура и традиции. Просто у русских эти культура и традиции - европейские. (p189)

Russian-speaking migrants assume that they behave as the native population and claim that the two cultures are close with not many differences between “Russians and English”. This self-perception of being Europeans, even the humble opinion of being backward Europeans (*отсталые европейцы*), signifies the high status of the host culture for Russian-speaking migrants, and highlights the cultural capital of the idea of Europeanism.

Может здесь, в Англии, русские не против интегрироваться. Они учат язык, одеваются как англичане и т.д. Но может быть между нами и англичанами нет большой разницы. Скорее у нас больше общего с ними чем, скажем, у мусульман с англичанами. Мы отсталые европейцы и всегда таковыми были и это неоспоримый факт, поэтому мы и стараемся перенять от западных европейцев всё самое лучшее при этом говоря, что мол мы ассимилируемся, а мусульмане нет. (p172)

Although the meanings of “culture”, “traditions” or “backward Europeans” are not specified in depth in these posts, the process of integration is exemplified by learning the native language and wearing European style clothes. Later in the discussion, the participants interpret culture retrospectively, excluding technology and contemporary achievements from the concept. In the following quote the word “культура” is used in terms of “heritage”, “traditions”:

Последовав примеру Запада, они [Japanese] многого добились, не утратив ни капли своей культуры. (p243)

Several other authors also perceive culture to be represented through history and traditions, discussing the concept with regard to its features in their native territory and/or in comparison with developments in the West, bringing out additionally the international prestige of their national culture (p73, p182, p185, p225, p263 etc.).

The concept of Europeanism expounded by Russian-speaking migrants in the researched discussion is generically contradictory: migrants praise education and democracy as European values, but they do not agree on what is a democratic policy towards migrants. When discussing ethnic issues, Russian-speaking migrants create different standards regarding special rights of chosen traditions on certain territory. Contributors perceive that the host traditions are superior to the cultures of ethnic minorities settled in the UK, although they do not necessarily reflect on their own status as strangers in a foreign country. When articulating their understandings of Europeanism, the participants refer to the concepts of culture and civilisation (*культура, цивилизация*) which embrace, in their perception, such criteria as the way of life of migrants, dress code, and ways of communication, values, similar education and upbringing¹¹.

V

It is important to reflect on the fact that participants do not always agree with each other. One can find a diversity of interpretations in the researched thread.

For example, previously quoted p31 is disputed by other senders (for example p41 and p82). P41 shares the concern that ethnic generalizations create the idea of a segregated world with a separate and exclusive existence of nations:

Мне кажется, тут добиваются следующего расклада: арабам жить надо в Арабии, индусам - в Индии, туркам - в Турции... тогда давайте евреев всех - в Израиль, русских - в Россию, украинцев - на Украину, казахов - в Казахстан и так далее. Смешно? Мне – да.

The participant equates migrants from India, Turkey and Arab Countries with the migrants from the former USSR living in Europe and extends the list of allegedly unwelcome immigrants to include Russians, Kazakhs and Ukrainians. Do discussants want ALL migrants to live in their native territories? This post helps the discussants realise the absurdity of some suggestions, and the conversation moves on to a

¹¹ Europeanism in connection with concepts of culture and civilization is discussed in 4.2.

discussion of social mechanisms that can guarantee rights and freedoms in contemporary Europe (p42, p43, p44, p58, p88) using the model of a “contemporary civilised world” (*современный цивилизованный мир*) where isolated communities do not fit in.

Another example can be found in an exchange of opinions between Mirror, Ludic and Shel. Ludic replies to the message (p39) posted slightly earlier by Mirror concerning Russian people in Kazakhstan:

Mirror, неужели эти русские так сильно и разительно отличаются от местных казахов? Мне кажется, что люди из Казахстана ведут себя и одеваются и общаются друг с другом очень похоже, по крайней мере, те, которых я знала.

She does not discuss the implications of decades of Soviet rule on the native population (ethnic Kazakhs), stating that, although the Russians in Kazakhstan did not switch to Islam or start speaking Kazakh, the two sets of people became more similar in their habits and behaviour. She does not reflect that this automatically implies that the native population had to change (switching to speaking Russian for example as below) in order to get close to the Russian population.

Значит люди там ассимилировались друг с другом все таки немного. Хотя ассимиляция и произошла не в сторону исламизации (да и немцы в свою религию никого не загоняют) и даже не в сторону казахского языка, но она произошла - люди стали более похожими и понимают друг-друга.

Responding to Ludic, Shel discusses her statements in detail and, although not labelling them imperialistic, reminds Ludic that she has no licence to abuse the “rights and traditions” of any national community. She constructs her argument referring to some *цивилизованный мир*, (presumably Britain or other European countries) where such abuse is impossible.

Насильная ассимиляция может и работает (если принять, что у ассимилирующего общества отсутствует совесть) - но по-моему только в полномасштабном варианте - запрета религии как таковой, насильственное подавление minority communities итп. Я сильно надеюсь, что все это в современном цивилизованном мире невозможно.

ИМХО когда кто-либо (извне) начинает решать за представителей некоторого community, что им делать с их религией и традициями - дело пахнет проблемами.

Several posts in this part of the discussion praise education as an integral part of European identity. For example, p58 (also p88) believes that education and the respect for human rights represent an essential part of Europeanism. For example, Shel blames modern politics for dress fetishism and claims that education will secure the proliferation of democratic values. Shel believes that integration is a natural process requiring only time and patience, and that it is possible to find a balance between ethnic and civic solidarities:

Многие находят для себя точку равновесия. Посмотрите на этнических индусов и пакистанцев в УК - и с культурной ассимиляцией и с сохранением традиций - все в порядке.

The opinions expressed show the diversity of interpretations and can be accounted as elements of counter-discourses. Explaining his understanding of counter-discourses Foucault wrote: "Rules are [...] impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing those rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them, so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules" (Foucault 1977:). In this case there are no evidences that counter opinions form a developed system able to "redirect" the discourse, but such diversity might reflect the appropriation of new grids of specification or an object of knowledge formation. It is possible to note that although migrants express different opinions, they use the same discursive constructs: the object of knowledge (Europeanism), European culture and traditions, civilisation *современный цивилизованный мир* etc. The multiplicity of opinions on-line is taken into account, but the research focus is placed on identity negotiations between native and host cultural dispositions, rather than on differences in individual opinions.

VI

In this thread one finds examples of ongoing cultural translation (Lotman)¹². The discussion concerning civic identities and the rights/responsibilities of an individual in a democratic society contains a relatively large number of words posted in English, unusual for a forum famous for pedantically monitoring the use of foreign languages in communications. There are a number of English quotations related to the concepts and realities of modern democracies: *“minority communities, host society”, “social alienation”, “history, democratic values and culture of the British society”, “social awareness and benefits of cultural diversity”*.

The inclusions in English show that migrants are leaning new norms and customs in their place of residence. They sometimes support their opinions referring to the realities of the country of residence, its cultural norms or institutionalised political rules, and use English rather than Russian to describe them, as in the following quotation:

-...следует просвещению способствовать - через школы и общественные мероприятия. Мне кажется что основным двигателем конфронтации и ксенофобии является невежество. И бороться если и стоит то не с платками, тюрбанами, папахами, бейсболками итп - а с невежеством. А способ борьбы с невежеством - пропаганда social awareness и benefits of cultural diversity.

The use of English rather than Russian in posts discussing democratic vs. non-democratic social programs can be attributed to the migrants having only been socialised in the new norms following their emigration from the native territory. These norms are shared and even customized by migrants, but democratic concepts exist as a separate discursive domain in their identity. This is another example of dualism or internal contradictions within the identity of the Russian-speaking migrants.

Billington, conducting recent research into Russian political elites, concluded that the situation of internal contradictions within the identity of contemporary Russians represents a special feature of the political situation in the post-Soviet space, where

¹² In detail see 3.7. and 4.5.

«идейные противоречия ... имеют место, скорее всего не столько между группами людей, сколько в сознании отдельной личности» (2005:148). It is also possible to speculate that migrants use English in such situations as a means to alienate their identity of being Russian-born, Russian-socialized and Russian-speaking from their identity as an individual settled in Britain.

A coexistence of separate and partly contradictory discourses in the same personality should not be interpreted as a specifically Russian or multilingual identity phenomenon. For example, Chase in her research on women school superintendents in the US identified two major cultural discourses used by them: one that stressed their accomplishments in their professional life, and the other which consisted of experiences of racial or gender discrimination. Chase noted that the women were confident at using both discourses, but became confused when they had to combine the two. Chase concluded that “the talk about professional work and talk about inequality belong to two different discursive domains, two conflicting vocabularies for articulating experience...” (1995:11)¹³.

VII

The idea of Europe as a contemporary, real, and civilized “common home” appears in the discussion rather late and it is constructed through the fidelity to historic traditions, the acceptance of European rules and customs and European legal norms. In the last days of the discussion, political culture plays a more important role than at the beginning of it¹⁴.

The acceptance of political culture associated with Europeanism emerges as a necessity and a duty in the conversation of Russian-speaking migrants. P110 defines the criteria for newcomers to be European: to be useful to a country of residence and to accept the laws of democracy. P112 categorises Europeans as those who live in Europe abiding by European law:

¹³ In detail the existence of two discursive domains is discussed in 4.5.

¹⁴ The impact of new social practices on the process of cultural appropriation is discussed in 4.5.c

...кто хочет может остается жить в европе по европейским законам. Кто не хочет - пусть едет обратно пасти верблюдов.

Later post 159 discusses the question of the personal responsibilities of political leaders, the author believing that their legacies depend on the results of their programmes as responsible “doctors” of society, rather than their success at the next election:

Это я к тому, что политики, как и врачи, должны прежде всего руководствоваться принципом "не навреди", а не играть близоруко на популистских настроениях, зарабатывая себе голоса на местных выборах.

The perception of Europe as a contemporary legal and political structure enhances the ideas expressed by migrants at the beginning of the discussion of belonging to a longstanding European cultural tradition.

VIII

The notion of the West was used for the first time on the eleventh day of the thread (22 April 2004). Thereafter the notion of the West is used in the discussion along with the notion of “Europeanism”, but with different connotations.

In p172 the participant called Foreigner (a Russian speaker from Estonia) believes that the process of integration in the case of Russian migrants represents a tradition for Russian culture to borrow from, and adapt to, the domain culture. He labels Russians “we backward Europeans” and introduces the concept of mimicking (copying) of Western European achievements (*перенять от западных европейцев*). Later in the discussion (p183) he self-identifies as an Eastern European. Foreigner associates Russian history with “*косность и азиатчина*” and expresses solidarity with the ideas of the nineteenth century “Westernizers”, quoting from an unidentified author the following:

...задача России, отсталой, невежественной, полуварварской страны, которая лишь со времени Петра Великого вступила на путь общечеловеческого культурного развития, как можно скорее изжить свою косность и азиатчину и, примкнув к европейскому Западу, слиться с ним в одну общечеловеческую культурную семью.

While the discussion has imagined Europe as an ideal state of culture and a democratic political structure, the notion of the West bears negative connotations and reflects the traditional dilemma of “Russia vs. the West”. First of all, the West is introduced in a historical perspective which unfolds as something hostile and vicious.

А то Ливония всегда искала приключения на свою голову, а потом винила во всем Россию.(p247)

Россия сама жила неплохо и другим давала жить [not exactly clear] - многие выжили благодаря ей, между прочим. Но Вашему разлюбезному Западу это не очень нравилось - то, что мы имеем сегодня [problems discussed above in the conversation] , мы в немалой степени обязаны именно Западу. (p243)

From this point on, Europe is only used in its contemporary context as referring to the EU (p254, p256, p258, etc.) or in its historic perspective as a geographical territory with a variety of countries. An emphasis on material culture is expressed here.

Давайте уточним что такое Западная Европа того времени: Фландрия, Юго-Западная Германия (Агсбурх), Северная Италия (Флоренция, Милан, Венеция). ...С чего вы взяли идею о превосходстве Европы в ремесле? Кроме Фламандского вельвета и сукна оригинального ничего не было - все было имитация :)... Транспортные расходы оказывали давление на ассортимент экспортных товаров. Например мед - никто не экспортировал, а воск экспортировался из-за цен на перевозку карго. Отставание в технологии между Россией и Европой было только в 16-17 веках. В Средние Века Россия была на уровне развития других периферийных стран (Восточной Германии, Венгрии, Польши, Прибалтики и Испании). (p282)

*)
В Западной Европе ремесленничество было более развито, чем в России, и продукция их была лучше и стоила дороже, это так, к примеру. (p270)*

Верно, в 13-14 веке - слабо развитая Европа имела негативный торговый баланс покрываемый серебром и золотом. Так что чумазые и вишивые (ну не было у них бань) европейцы Руси не указ были в 13-14 веке :) (p263)

Не вы первый и не вы последний с обвинениями в варварстве. Это весьма распространенный аргумент, начиная с 17-ого века. (p225)

As has been described, contributors to the discussion unanimously self-identify with Europe when discussing the problems of migrants of other origins, but any comparison between Russia and the unspecified “West” encourages them to distinguish themselves from Europe. References to the ambiguous role of the West in

Russian history leads (for the first time, and after several weeks of the thread) to a statement on the differences between the Russian and the western mentality:

У русских ментальность несколько другая, это вы верно заметили. Авось и соображалка (не путать с интеллектом :)), две интересные особенности национального характера. Объяснений куча, но так уж исторически сложилось. (p249)

Historical and cultural verbal confrontation with the West evokes ideas of “Eurasianism” and leads to the suggestion that a Eurasian Union be created with former Soviet Republics as member states:

России надо сейчас оклематься и свой Евразийский Союз создавать. В одиночку мы не вытянем. Наметки есть: Россия, Белоруссия и Казахстан - экономически завязаны крепко... (p252)

At this stage participants lose interest in the discussion (not encouraged by technical problems inherent in threads with more than 100 posts) and the above question stays only partly debated. The whole thread allows an insight into a negotiation of meanings of Europeanism and the West in migrants’ identity discourse. While the notion of Europe comprises a variety of meanings and represents an ideal for migrants, the West keeps its role as the great Other of Russia.

IX

To summarise, the thread started in the forum of Russian-speaking migrants to Britain as a discussion of a new institutionalised decision of a different country (Germany) with regards to a different group of migrants, Muslims (presumably non-Russian speakers). But the participants treated the new legal ruling of the foreign State as important and relevant to the country of their residence. The unfolded discussion did not touch German realities, but focused on the articulation of *us/them* dilemma for Russian-speaking migrants based in Britain. The questions of “othering” were intervened by the ideas of “Europeanism”.

As discussed in the chapter on Russian national identity¹⁵, the concept of the West (which included Europe) as the great Other has played a formative role in the Russian

¹⁵ See 2.3.c this thesis, also 1.5.

national identity discourse. Still, the dilemmas of Russia and the West along with other historic grids of specification (such as the importance of territorial identification, the mixed and undistinguished perceptions of ethnicity-religion-culture) complicate the exclusion/inclusion categorisation today. But the thread demonstrated that while the concept of the West keeps its ambiguity for Russian-speaking migrants in the UK, the concept of Europeanism becomes more popular and acquires positive associations¹⁶.

Migrants' identity negotiations, as represented in the analysed discussion, reflect the marginality of their discourses: the domain of the national present is connected in this thread with Europe (and Britain in particular), the national past is associated with Russian culture and traditions, while borders of the domain of the national continuity are shifting to reflect their discourse of othering. Russian-speaking migrants appeal to their common memories of the Soviet past or to their knowledge of Russian history and traditions, but rarely self-identify with inhabitants of Russia. Participants tend to support the policies of the host country and identify themselves with the native population of the UK. The on-line othering of the Russian-speaking migrants is further complicated by their distancing from migrants of other origins living in the UK (through direct statements and by making the latter a topic of on-line discussions). Thus the thread shows migrants in the process of learning and "translating between cultures". The participants re-negotiate their identity under the influences of new realities both in the host country and in their native society.

It is argued here that "Europeanism" emerges in this discussion as an object of the migrants' identity discourse. It is not strictly defined in geographical or historical terms, neither in terms of institutions or governance, but rather imagined through the participants' understandings of their own various affiliations to Europe: territorial,

¹⁶ When discussing contemporary situation, migrants refer mainly to the realities and history of two countries, Russia and Britain, and they do not distinguish the latter from continental Europe or the EU.

religious, cultural, civic and ethnic (the latter often being confused with religious and cultural). These narratives are often interrelated and rooted in such grids of specification as “being cultured” and “civilised”. The above discussed thread shows that the cultural borderline self-imposed by the people themselves is defined through the concept of Europeanism, articulated through references to *kul'tura* and *tsivilizatsiia*. Although in the above discussion, participants give various interpretations of both, further analysis of these concepts is needed and will be provided in the next sub-chapter.

The following part of the study will further investigate the characteristics of the object of knowledge (Europeanism): the role of inherited grids of specification and development of new features through the new (for Russian-speaking migrants) surfaces of emergence (e.g. experiences of the British neighbourhood and local practices of civic society).

4.2. EUROPEANISM AS AN OBJECT OF MIGRANTS' DISCOURSE

Drawing on Foucault, this subchapter aims to examine how the communications on-line name, define and structure Europeanism as an object of migrants' discourse. Temporal and spatial perspectives of the object are discussed here as well.

4.2.a Культурный, европейский and цивилизованный

The ideas of culture and civilisation play an important role in the researched migrants' computer mediated communications: participants use them widely in their arguments and pattern them with their perception of Europeanism.

The first quotation below shows that migrants correlate culture as education, knowledge and artistic expression with taught norms of communication and behaviour. Contributors to the researched media often point out this relationship and stress their aspirations to be “civilized”. The following example (sent by a participant

who is angry with personal remarks posted by a discussant) advises that norms of “cultured communication” be observed while discussing cultural topics:

Я Вас уже просила не реагировать на мои посты, так как считаю Вашу манеру общения недопустимой. [...]Мы в этом тред о культуре говорим. Будьте добры, соблюдайте культуру общения.¹⁷

The next example demonstrates that being cultured is perceived by migrants as one of the typical characteristics of being European:

...а что, все мои друзья и знакомые очень культурные люди, я их вполне могу назвать европейцами.¹⁸

The following citation also deciphers the notions of “European” individuals as being “cultured”, able to discuss disagreements without the use of force and by legal means:

...потом мы, беларусы, культурные люди, европейцы, нам уличные разборки всегда были противны.¹⁹

This post is taken from an on-line debate about an episode at the Belorussian border when a group of European parliament members were not allowed entry into the country because they allegedly did not have visas. The source of the information was the Russian Internet News agency ROSBIZNESCONSULTING and a link to the article was provided in the first post of the thread. Participants discussed Belarus, exchanging opinions about the leader of the country and the local politics. Some participants interpreted the incident as a result of the Soviet political legacy, while others argued that Belarus was successfully manoeuvring between EU and Russia, classifying Russia and everything Russian as non-European. Various anti-Russian statements through the discussion (for example: *А как обнимает русский медведь - мы уже знаем*) describe this country as expansionist and totalitarian. In terms of political and civic culture, Soviet and Russian traditions are perceived by participants as being the opposite of Europeanism.

An important point to be made is that that the above quotation lists *беларусы* (Byelorussians) along with *европейцы* (Europeans) and *культурные люди* (cultured

¹⁷ <http://127.0.0.1:800/Default/www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-14181.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=37985&page=4&pp=10>

¹⁹ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=37985&page=4&pp=10>

people) as synonyms. Participants decode both concepts in terms of *культурность* (civilised norms of behaviour, specific patterns of consumption and status symbols) and at the same time as a democratic way of governance and respect for human rights. In this discussion, culture is often interpreted as independent politics and friendly relationships with neighbouring countries, the ability to avoid scandals, and as individual dignity and respect for the law. The same features were interpreted as European (and Belorussian) characteristics²⁰.

Another message declares that civilisation is created and dispersed around the world solely by Europeans (*Европейцы* as *носители цивилизации*):

*Европейцами, носителями цивилизации, Куплинг "русских азиатов" не считал.*²¹

Contributors to the web-forums associate Europeanism with a specific set of cultural traditions and values: they ignore any cultural divisions within Europe and construct the concept of European culture as non-ethnic, pan-national heritage (*собственная культура*).

То, что на корпоративных рождественских открытках в Европе рекомендуется писать Seasonal Greetings вместо Merry Christmas, чтобы не обидеть (!) многонациональное сообщество - полнейший абсурд и прямая дорога к потере собственной культуры. Это уже какой-то экстремизм по отношению к себе же, европейцу. (Smoking ban 18.11.04)

At the same time the message marks the process of othering in identifying Europeanism: the post states that everything which is perceived as European culture by participants is endangered by hostile (non-Christian) intrusions.

To summarise, migrants often identify themselves as Europeans and in categorical statements describe Europe as the embodiment of culture and the only civilised region. The notions *культурный* and *цивилизованный* are often used in the researched texts interchangeably. The above concepts represent grids of specification

²⁰ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=37985&page=4&pp=10>

²¹ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-42500-p-2.html>

provided by the Russian national identity discourse²², and thus the contemporary identity discourse of migrants use these pre-formed grids to order, specify and delimit (Foucault 1972) reality.

In his book “Culture” Eagleton comes to the general conclusion that the concept of “culture” as “civilization” was a product of the Enlightenment and was highly significant for this period (Eagleton 2000:). But the conceptualization of the semantic link between “culture” and “civilization” differs amongst various countries: “Between languages as within a language, the range and complexity of sense and reference indicate both difference of intellectual position and some blurring or overlapping” (Williams 1976:92). For example, observing the semantic development of the word *culture* in English, Williams states that in the 18th century it was used interchangeably with the word “civilization” to describe the process of “the historical developments of the humanity” which produced cultured, civilized individuals and relationships (1976:89). But he also specifies that in English in the nineteenth century the word *culture* was used in the plural symbolizing an alternative to the “orthodox and dominant *civilization*” (*ibid*). The perception of culture as civilisation is well rooted in the Russian national identity discourse where both concepts stayed undifferentiated for longer. For example, Kelly and Shepherd stated that the association of culture with civilisation was very important for Russia in the nineteenth and even twentieth century (e.g. Kelly and Shepherd 1998). However, in the Novyi Slovar’ Russkogo Iazyka (2000), the word *culture* is still used as a synonym for *civilization*, the latter being decoded as the process of human development, the results of such processes and the universal values of such development.

In on-line communications both concepts (*культура* and *цивилизация*) support the one of Europeanism, which emerges as an object of knowledge created by the migrants’ discourse. Although there is a long historic tradition of such conceptualization in Russia²³, this thesis argues that Europeanism as migrants “talk”

²²Discussed in Chapter 2.

²³ 2.3.c, 2.3.g., 1.5.d.

it into existence possesses a variety of characteristics, reflecting their unique experiences, historic grids of specification as well as contemporary realities.

4.2.b. Europeanism and culture: temporal dimension of authority construction

This subchapter further investigates migrants' perceptions of culture in connection with Europeanism as an object of knowledge. It attempts to prove the hypothesis that contributors perceive contemporary realities through an idealised image of Europeanism created but them, and locate their cultural ideal in the past.

The method and sampling frame for this strand of analysis has been described in detail in this thesis.²⁴ In order to conduct this experiment, names of 500 famous people associated with culture (artists, scientists, writers) were collected from various threads related to sub- forums *Культура*. These names are seen as cultural "landmarks" that assist in defining temporal and geographical coordinates of *культура*. These were differentiated according to dates, nationality and language (Russian or English). Overall the ratio of non-Russian to Russian personalities mentioned in the threads is 4:5, a not unexpected result from first-generation migrants who grew up in their country of origin. The list of names in the compilation is also indicative of a high level of education among the migrants.

However, further analysis showed an uneven distribution of names among several markers. In order to customise the chosen research method, a distinction has been drawn between the information field and the field of reference on the bases of the types of argument and discussion in which the names were brought up.

4.2.b.1 The information field of культура

As described earlier²⁵, the information field reflects recent experiences of participants. It contains names quoted in the discussions in connection with recent events: movies seen, attractions visited, books read or suggested.

²⁴ See this thesis 3.4.e.

²⁵ 3.4.e.

For example, in one of the threads of the *Russianlondon* Forum, participants discuss their impressions after visiting a musical in London and share information about the theatre location and ticket prices:

Love007: *И в каком театре играют The Phantom of the opera?*

Summer Roberts: *Her majesty's theatre, Haymarket. Билеты £35-£50.*²⁶

Often the names, especially those of writers, are written in Russian. For example, a participant called Ten` Enota describes the books that helped her to learn about artists and writers. She does not specify whether she read these books in Russian before or after her emigration:

Ten` enota: ... *Мережковский "Воскресшие Боги" Леонардо да Винчи - о величайшем художнике и исследователе эпохи возрождения Леонардо да Винчи.*

Дэвид Вейс "Возвышенное и земное"- о Моцарте. Ирвинг Стоун "Жажда жизни" - о художнике-импрессионисте Ван Гогге. Лион Фейхтвангер "Гойя или тяжкий путь познания" - об испанском художнике Гойе. Андре Моруа "Прометей, или жизнь Бальзака", "Лелия, или жизнь Жорж Санд", "Олимпио, или жизнь Виктора Гюго". Моруа - мастер жанра романизированной биографии, и книг, описывающих жизни великих людей....²⁷

Another participant describes her recent impressions and compares the authors she likes now with those she admired during her “student past”. She also provides names in Cyrillic:

Zaru: *Айрис Мердок, вместе с Малколмом Бредбери и Дэвидом Лоджем, похоже, остались там же, в студенческом прошлом. Кацуо Ишигуро, Роуз Трэмэйн, Дэвид Митчелл - этот в особенности - значительно ближе.²⁸*

This can be interpreted as implying that migrants often read books by European (including British) authors in Russian. This conclusion is supported by electronic links to the Russian language resources provided by migrants in their messages or information about translation of books in Russian. For example,

Откопала с месяц назад в Библиоглобусе [http://www.bgshop.ru] перевод 2005 года на русский язык романа Коэна "Beautiful Losers". С удивлением из сопроводительной статейки к изданию узнала, что автор - номинант Нобелевской премии 2005 года в области литературы. Прозу его никогда не

²⁶ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/showthread.php?t=11279>

²⁷ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/archive/index.php/t-10924.html>

²⁸ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=42501&page=3&pp=10>

читала, более того - по темноте своей- даже не слышала о ней 🧐
Читается легко. Оставляет в офигении, недоумении и лёгкой прострации (ну не вяжется в моём сознании образ Козна со всем написанным, никак 😊)
Перечитывать, наверное, не буду, но написано хорошо. Пожалуй, поищу ещё
"The Favorite Game" 😊²⁹

Or another example,

Under –

http://www.fictionbook.ru/ru/author/heinlein_robert_a/iov_ili_osmeyanie_spravedlivosti/Начинается довольно-таки скучно. Зато продолжение с лихвой это окупает.

Sometimes contributors quote titles of books, published in their original language some time long ago but only recently translated into Russian, as if they were new or, on occasion, use double names for the same book. For example, “The Magus” by Fowles is quoted as both “Волхв” and “Маг”.

The numerous mentions of names of post-Soviet authors prove that migrants are also closely following cultural developments in their native territory.

И ва: Это работы Александра Петросяна, питерского фотохудожника. Не могу не поделиться такой красотой !³⁰

Natalya2 из недавно прочитанного понравился фантастический рассказ "2048"
<http://fuga.ru/shelley/2048/contents.htm>

NOEL Интересное чтение на doske [also a Russian language on-line resource],
военно-медицинские рассказы по линку на lib.ru³¹

There are also posts about local events connected to the Russian culture. Love007 answers a question about a Russian book shop:

Love007: Русский книжный магазин в Лондоне? Есть ли в Лондоне такой магазин или магазин с большим выбором русских книг, помнится в центре около Оксфорд стрит что-то подобное было, только не помню ни названия, ни точного адреса.³²

²⁹ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/showthread.php?t=11580>

³⁰ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/showthread.php?t=11582&page=1&pp=20>

³¹ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/showthread.php?t=9233>

³² <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/showthread.php?t=11313>

Shurikfromcambridge informs other participants about a lecture in Cambridge by a politician turned writer, providing a link to one of the websites of the Ukrainian diaspora in the town:

Недавно обнаружил информацию про довольно уникальную лекцию про Чернобыль. Лекцию будет читать Алла Ярошинская, бывший советник Ельцина и Горбачева. Сама лекция будет происходить в Кэмбридже (Робинсон Коледж) 24 Февраля, 2006 года. Детали приведены на следующем веб-сайте: www.ukrainiancambridge.org³³

Another contributor invites Russian-speaking poets in Britain to take part in a competition named after Pushkin, also providing a link to a Russian-language chat site:

*Всех настоящих поэтов и бардов приглашаю на международный пушкинский Турнир в Лондон. Подробности - <http://turnir2005.chat.ru>*³⁴

In the information field of migrants, local names dominate, as is to be expected from people staying in Britain, their recent experiences necessarily reflecting everyday realities of this country and the way migrants are accustoming to and accommodating themselves within the new culture. Likewise the information field reflects conscious attempts to comprehend the local culture and learn the native language. Indeed, the information field contains numerous names of English speaking writers, British artists and European scientists. In terms of language of reading, the information field is constructed from both English and Russian sources.

The thread titled “*книга, которая вас потрясла, удивила, рекомендуете, и почему...*” from one of the *Культура* subforums can be analysed as an example of a discussion in the information field of migrants. It lasted for a month and contained more than 60 entries. Participants mentioned the books they had read recently and which they recommended to others, sometimes providing brief descriptions of the books’ contents but did not discussed them in any detail. The thread contains 34 books named by author or by its title. The number of foreign names is 4 times higher

³³ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/archive/index.php/t-11897.html>

³⁴ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/archive/index.php/t-9657.html>

than the Russian ones. Among them 9 represent Russian-language authors, 7 being contemporary with only 2 “classical” names – *Лев Николаевич* [Tolstoy] and *Мережковский*. Among foreign language authors the correlation is a 24:1 in favour of contemporary names. This observation shows that migrants use such conversations primarily to keep informed about the latest cultural events, both in their native and host cultures. At the same time they are more interested in “catching up” with the cultural background of the host country. Furthermore, native and host cultures are not separated in this information space: for example, migrants read books by contemporary European and British authors in Russian, by non-British authors popular in Russia in English, and compare translations with originals.

Turning to the question of how migrants define their culture in terms of time and geography, it is important to note that within the information field they distinguish between what they perceive as high culture or real culture as distinct from other cultural production. Words *культура*, *литература*, *искусство* in these threads are often used judgementally. Migrants do not necessarily perceive their new impressions as phenomena of “culture” (meaning in this respect “high”, “real” art and literature); rather they discuss them as means of understanding local life or simply as entertainment:

PIXIE - Я уже по-моему всем уши прожужжала (т.е. глаза намозилила - трудно на форумах жужжать 😊) про ***I Don't Know How She Does it***. Не знаю, правда, насколько это можно назвать литературой - это просто жизнь.³⁵

Pixie distinguishes between high (“real”) and entertaining (“low”) culture. Such separation is discussed by Lotman as a way of semantic codification of external cultural influences³⁶, and therefore this message demonstrates that the field of information is not separated from the field of reference of migrants. It is worth noting as well, that such categorisation (real/high and low culture) highlights the role of “inherited” grids of specification, as the distinction between high and entertaining culture is well expressed in Russian culture and social life.

³⁵ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/showthread.php?t=9233>

³⁶ 3.4.c

To summarise, the information field of the researched group of migrants is landmarked by a variety of contemporary names, Russian as well as European. The majority of names and events belong to the host culture. The local cultural context is important in migrants' field of information. Their discussions reflect migrants' intentions to learn more about the host country and reveal their "homing desires".

The Russian-language sources (especially digital sources) of information continue playing an important part in the way this field is formed. The above examples represent an embodiment of diasporic solidarities discussed earlier in this study³⁷: migrants negotiate new experiences through advice, questions and shared emotions while communicating on-line. It was noted that the contributors negotiate new experiences by delimiting and ordering them according to grids of specification of the Russian national identity discourse.

4.2.b2. Field of reference

If new impressions are qualified as information field when they have not been yet fully appropriated by the researched group and included into their cultural system, the field of reference contains information that has been codified and reflected upon (Lotman 2001:610). To exemplify authority construction in the field of reference, the personal names from the thread *Эстетика небрежности* from the Russian London Forum (05.09.2005 -12.10.2005) will be discussed.

This conversation was started by Pinolla who posted an extract from a poem by Boris Pasternak and wrote that she had spotted a semantic error in the piece. She suggested that a thread be established where inaccuracies in the works of various artists could be sent to:

Зачастую поэты, писатели, художники и прочие служители муз в угоду образам пренебрегают здравым смыслом и допускают нелепые оплошности. Готовы ли вы им простить такую небрежность? Хотелось бы ради интереса начать коллекцию подобных опусов. Так что, если вы заметили нечто неадекватное, прошу сюда.

³⁷ See 1.5.a.

She also attached a picture by Petrov-Vodkin, noting that the length of one of the horse's front legs is much shorter than it would be in reality.

Следующий экземпляр от Петрова-Водкина: полотно "Купание красного коня". Не знаю, сколько водки надо было выпить, чтобы так изобразить коня. Если распрямить его переднюю согнутую ногу, то получится...о боже...лошадь-такса с укороченными ногами.

Some participants objected to her pedantic vision and claimed that "art is subjective" and should not simply mirror reality:

Jul's: Кроме пропорций и приближенного к фотографическому сходства, есть еще настроение картины. Иногда оно важнее, чем условности. За это я люблю "светлые" работы Климта.

Beresina: Я тоже не считаю диспропорцию небрежностью - так даже скорее интереснее.

Watson : Некоторые диспропорции и неточности не являются доминирующими и не портят общего положительного впечатления. Мне нравится эта работа, и цвет коня не смущает.

Some participants who shared the views of Pinolla praised the beauty of real-life proportions, as in this example from Summer Roberts:

SummerRoberts :Леонардо да Винчи с Микеланджело мне доставляют большие эстетического наслаждения, так как их талант прочно опирается на знание физиологических параметров изображаемого.

Both the supporters of realism and the defenders of artistic subjectivity appealed to the same types of authority, which is associated with culture in their native tradition: ancient heritage and the classical art of the Renaissance, classical literature. For example, references to ancient and classical traditions of Egypt or Greece were submitted with links to museum collections or supported by personal knowledge:

Мануа 246 "Неправильное" изображение глаз на древнеегипетских росписях. На лицах, повернутых к зрителю в профиль, глаза смотрят "в упор". :)
<http://egypt.org.ru/gallery/museum/pic307.html>
<http://egypt.org.ru/gallery/museum/pic304.html>
<http://egypt.org.ru/gallery/museum/pic308.html>

Культурность as one of the grids of specification of the object of the discourse emerges here as connected to clearly specified authorities of delimitation: classical art obtains authority to classify and distinguish between culture and non-culture.

Paveluk: *Древних художников ругать - последнее дело, т.к. мы ничуть не лучшие их. Я, например, не воспринимаю раскрашенные статуи - в моем представлении это кич, а ведь они объективно ближе к оригиналу. Правда, я предпочитаю не пустые глаза, а с пробуравленным зрачком, хотя на самом деле в глазу дырки нет и, соответственно, древние античные статуи были без зрачков (точная передача формы).*

Through the length of the discussion the names of Russian writers, poets and philosophers (Balmont, Pleshcheev, Lermontov, Pushkin, Florensky) and European and Russian painters (Leonardo, Michelangelo, Brunelleschi, Matisse, Klimt, Dali, Picasso) were mentioned in connection with their creations or innovations (all of their names being written in Cyrillic). No names of contemporary artists were discussed in the same vein: only five names of contemporaries were mentioned, and none of them as a cultural landmark. The poet A. Makarevich was mentioned in connection with his joke, a certain Sidorov in connection with a parody by Ivanov, and the critic Shapiro and the academician A. Raushenbakh referred to as authors of critical articles quoted by participants.

For the participants, culture encompassed only creations tested by history. Any attempts of participants to impress with personal general knowledge and intellect did not extend to analysing new cultural trends etc. Although the thread discussed cultural errors and misfits, participants excluded contemporary authors from the concept of *культура* (real culture), symbolising that culture belongs to the past. The understanding of culture as the authority of the classics was more important than the creativity or artistic endeavours of today. Contemporary cultural developments represent on of Foucauldian absences in the discussion. As in the threads on Europeanism and ethnicity³⁸, it is possible to conclude that it is the retrospective image of culture which determines how migrants construct their cultural identities today.³⁹

³⁸ 4.4.

³⁹ <http://www.russianlondon.ru/forum/showthread.php?t=10880>

Another absence⁴⁰ relates to the names of non-European authors: the culture as a grid of specification constructed by the discourse on-line is limited to the Russian/Soviet and European cultural heritage. Cultural achievements from other parts of the world are either not known or excluded from migrants' perception of *культура*.

A further observation is that none of the participants in this thread used the Latin alphabet for any of these names. Thus, although participants reside in the UK and their information field encompasses local cultural events in Britain or Europe, their field of reference is constructed out of previous experiences, socialisation and education (surfaces of emergence), and based on a "received" back home set of "classical" names and ideas (authorities of delimitation). Migrants use the grids of specifications, developed and shared at their place of origin. These authorities to classify and delimit their experiences of resettlement were formed by their native culture discourses and have not been revised/enhanced in the country of settlement yet.

In order to provide more evidence to support this hypothesis as to how migrants from the former USSR perceive cultural phenomena, one more thread will be discussed. The thread "*культура для масс - с чем ее едят?*" was launched by Fiesta on the web-forum Bratok in mid January 2004 and lasted 13 days. Fiesta invited participants to investigate the phenomenon of mass culture in general and asked how it can be categorised in Russia and in the world at large:

Массовое российское кино, театр, музыка - есть ли они? на кого они рассчитаны, на какие эмоции воздействуют, и зачем? Брейнвош? Идеология? Александров, Рязанов, Табаков - массовые режиссеры? низходящая октава с-дур финальной партии балета Чайковского "Щелкунчик" - массовая музыка? а Высоцкий? или Геликон (родные пенаты :)) ? А массовый музыкальный театр это "Сильва" или "Норд Ост"? А нерусское массовое искусство – Голливуд - это что? А Болливуд? :) У меня очень много вопросов и очень мало ответов - большая тема.... :cry

Responding to her post, contributors suggested various criteria for mass culture including utilising it as a synonym for fashionable trends (Uxbridge Tiger: *Можно*

⁴⁰ 3.3.b.2 and 3.7.

заменить словом "модное"), primitive standards (Shel: *развлекательность, сентиментальность, примитивизм как в изображении чувств, так и в трактовке событий, схематичность etc*) or commercial production (lo-ra: *Правильнее, вероятно, было бы разделить (хотя бы условно) искусство на коммерческое и некоммерческое - не в том смысле, какое продается, а которое нет, а с той точки зрения, какое исходно делается в расчете на массовый спрос, а какое - исходя из иных соображений*). Participants attempted to distinguish between mass cultural production and the culture itself, thus evoking the process of codification as appropriation of new phenomena in the way described by Lotman.

In one of the first messages cinematographic tradition was separated into Soviet, Western (primarily American) and European schools. The latter was considered the most advanced, with both Soviet and Western traditions labelled by Lo_ra as "programmed" mass culture, while European cinema was associated with "real" culture, which was decoded as sophisticated, non-ideological, and even elitist:

Эмоции "послевкусия", например, массового фильма - и западная и советская индустрия давала/ет только положительные. "Массовый фильм" должен призывать к созиданию, вере в будущее и т.д. разными средствами выразительности - это верно, по-вашему, или нет? т.е. добро ДОЛЖНО побеждать зло, в массовом фильме (в элитарном все может быть наоборот и обычно бывает, например, в европейском кино).

The questions of social stratification of culture were also raised early in the discussion. Shel posted a message questioning whether mass culture could be identifiable as such by its audience. She confronted the elitism of such a perception: "you are sort of Earl, and we are sort of cattle". She also claimed that such an attitude is non-cultured (*некультурный*), this term referring to the connotations of culture as civilisation accepted in the identity discourse ⁴¹:

"Массовая культура" - характеристика субъекта восприятия или объекта восприятия? Если субъекта, то можно попробовать определять "массовость" через аудиторию, имхо приводит к очень некультурным результатам ("ты типа граф, а мы типа быдло").

⁴¹ 4.2.a. and 4.4.

Furthermore, in this conversation the class construction of culture is mostly alluded to, rather than scrutinised or investigated, in the same way as previously noted during the discussion on civilisation and culture.

There are various remarks demonstrating that contributors link culture with the social upbringing of the audience. For example, Diver believes that mass culture is designed for the uneducated population. He also connects social status (*широкие слои населения*) and level of education (*недостаточно подготовлено школами*) with the intellectual abilities of the audience (*способностей этих самых широких масс*):

... А что если Массовая Культура - это культура рассчитанная на широкие слои населения, которое в массе своей :) недостаточно подготовлено школами, чтобы понимать более трех аккордов. Обязательным атрибутом Массовой Культуры, производимой профессионально, является учет уровня образования и способностей этих самых широких масс.

Ironical remarks appearing through the threads contain allusions to other social inequalities (occupational or territorial) which, according to the contributors, influence the cultural proficiency of the audience:

Vallka: Я б чего заметил - те, кто начинает такой разговор, первым делом как бы дают всем понять - "я не масса, не толпа, не какой-нибудь колхозник из автобуса. Я выше всех масс потому что могу понять разницу между массовым и 'настоящим' искусством". Что уже понахивает снобизмом. Выпад прежде всего против меня самого, так что не обвиняйте в наезде, плиз :)

The above message is a response to a post about farmers (country men) in Russia who used to go on coach trips, organised by their trade union, to attend performances of "Swan Lake" or something similar at the Bolshoy Theatre. For the author of this message, "колхозник из автобуса" symbolises a lower class of person whose level of cultural development is suspect.

Another participant mocks regional pronunciation which is aimed to create an image of a non-cultured, unarticulated, non-civilised personality of low social status:

Fiesta: так я ж з Житомиру....:) ГраждАне, это шо же делается!...среди бела дня....наїжсжаютъ.....джипами Широки.....на беззащитных....4 страницы отборного тексту....заграницей.....а еще борются за звание "community with mind" :) (см. Иван Васильевич меняет профессию :)

Despite the aforementioned allusions to social inequalities, the social aspects of the topic are in general not openly articulated and discussion is muted in this thread.

The comparison between mass and true cultures is constructed through the alternative of the artistic achievements of the past (praised by migrants) and the alleged shallowness of contemporary artists. Contributors deny the existence of anything admirable in contemporary art and expound on the death of culture in today's environment. Participants encapsulate culture within the past, without specifying precisely which era this past refers to. For example, Pinolla writes that she cannot recall anything inspiring in the culture of the 20th century. She describes her feelings as being of shock and surprise when she sees what is widely accepted as contemporary "high" culture.

Pinolla: Попыталась вспомнить, какое из явлений культуры 20-го века меня искренне восхитило и не смогла. Шокировало - да (как фильм Паоло Пазолини "Сало или 100 дней Содома"), удивляло - да (как попытка Франкфутского балета создать симбиоз театра, видео и телодвижений, которые я бы с натяжкой назвала балетом), но восхитило...? Может завтра что-нибудь припомню. :bird:

It will be noted at the same time, that although denying any positive effect from the performances of the Frankfurt ballet or the movies of Pazolini, by bringing them up in her post she ensures that these phenomena are transferred from the information field into the reference field, demonstrating the process of appropriation of new cultural⁴² phenomena by the Russian-speaking migrants.

Referring back to Lotman's "dominant codes" (cultural influences being classified either as culturally existent or non-existent, such a codification being a necessary and unavoidable stage of cultural appropriation), mass culture in this discussion is categorised by migrants as non-culture, whereas "real" culture is not patterned with contemporary personalities or intellectuals but is exclusively associated with the achievements of the past.

⁴² Also 3.7.c. and 4.4.

Ло-га: У меня есть один знакомый - вполне академический современный композитор. ... Массовую культуру ругает страшными словами, но при этом говорит, что музыка, вызывающая ранее поминавшийся катарсис, вся уже написана; не следует пытаться переплюнуть Бетховена или, скажем, Чайковского, а нужно в школах углубленно преподавать музыку, заставляя слушать ее как можно больше; а дальше - сочинять произведения по принципу аллюзии - ну, чтобы она вызывала в памяти другие, более ранние произведения, - в этом и есть самый кайф.

The last quote conceptualises culture as memory, customised by an educated individual, recalled through the processes of retelling, recalling and remembering. 96% of the European personalities discussed in the field of reference belong to the era of the eighteenth-nineteenth century.

It can be concluded that participants are not ignorant about contemporary cultural personalities/trends, but that the latter do not represent authorities delimiting their discourse. Contributors classify contemporary culture as low culture to which mass culture is also linked. Their cultural ideal is “retrospective”. The identity discourse on-line delimits *культура* as culture of the past, more specifically classical European cultural tradition.

Based on their geographical and cultural proximity to classical civilizations, participants construct their hierarchies of individual and group identity in much the same way as the bourgeois elites of the 19th century. In ‘Age of Empire’ (Hobsbawm 1987), Hobsbawm defines such elites as special social-cultural types in Western culture. By linking themselves to the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome, such elites justify their moral and intellectual prominence as well as their cultural and social superiority (Mauss 1985). Russian-speaking migrants use the same strategy on-line in attempting to prove that they belong to the European tradition in terms of the Enlightenment, which embodies culture in general for them.

For Russian migrants, culture means a specific set of traditions filtered by time. However, it is important to reflect on differences in the cross-cultural perception of the word ‘tradition’ in English and Russian. As noted in 4.1. the idea of tradition in

British culture entails strong associations with “respect and duty... the sense of tradition as an active process” (Williams 1976:319). The concept of tradition in Russian culture is significantly different. For example, in *Novyi Slovar’ Russkogo Iazyka*, tradition is explained as something that was formed historically and has passed through generations by means of stories, oral or written (ideas, knowledge, opinions, ways of doing things etc): *“то, что сложилось исторически и передается из поколения в поколение путем преданий, устно или письменно (идеи, знания, взгляды, образ действий и т.п.)”* with a second meaning of “rooted” order, a habit *“укоренившийся порядок в чем-л.; обычай”* (*Novyi Slovar’ Russkogo Iasyka*, 2000). Using a metaphor, it is possible to make a comparison between inheriting a living estate on the one hand and taking care of a museum on the other. In the first case a new owner is expected to make repairs and improvements as well as filling it with necessary contemporary artefacts. In the second case the keeper is expected only to research, save, restore and dust the artefacts so as to be able to pass them to the next generations as a collection rather than a living object.

To summarise, the main disjunction one can observe in the field of reference is temporal. The construction of authority in the reference field highlights an importance of “classical” ideals for migrants. The contributors naturalise (in Foucauldian sense⁴³) their understanding of culture through exchange of opinions based on shared common knowledge, a set of pre-existed grids of specifications. In a clear distinction, migrants refer to the authority of what they perceive as high or real culture, but such idealised cultural creations are usually placed in the past.

This disjunction is also geographical. *Культура* is associated with Europeanism. Contributors not only see the former retrospectively, but accept only the authority of a specifically “European” past. Thus culture of Europe itself is also reduced to some “classical” authorities of previous centuries. Participants distinguish contemporary art from *культура*, which emerges in their discussions as a rigid monumental structure,

⁴³ 3.3.b.1.

where the aesthetic achievements of the past play the role of the only stable and thus universal point of reference.

4.2.c. Europeanism and civilisation: spatial dimension

4.2.c.1 Mapping Europeanism: Is democracy a territory or society?

This part of my study aims to analyse geographic characteristics of “Europeanism” as an object of migrants’ discourse. It has been shown in 4.1. and 4.2 that participants define their identity as European and decipher this as meaning that they are cultured and civilized. The idea of Europe as a model of civilisation is articulated in migrants’ identity discourse in its historic perspective (2.3.) and represents one of its grids of specification⁴⁴. The discourse on civilization contains multiple references to personal freedom and social justice, civic rights as being an integral part of Europeanism. Migrants emblematically label such values as “democracy” and “democratic”.

This subchapter emphasises patterns of migrants’ understanding of *цивилизация* and attempts to show that the migrants conceptualise it as a territorial construct. It will be exemplified how the contributors to the web-forum map an imagined “territory” of civilisation and democracy.

On-line discussions about democracy and civilisation feature a wide geographical range of topics: migrants actively participate in discussing news around the globe, as well as domestic news in their home countries. Migrants remain critical of or negative towards any state perceived as being in breach of democratic rules. There are various discussions (with mainly negative conclusions) concerning whether the contemporary Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian or Uzbek regimes are free and democratic. Migrants exchange their opinions in a number of threads with descriptive titles. For example,

*Когда Украина вступит в Евросоюз...*⁴⁵,

*The last dictator in Europe / Belarussians, enough is enough*⁴⁶,

⁴⁴ It will be shown in 4.6. that migrants challenge and enhance these grids of specification through their experiences of migration and re-settlement.

⁴⁵ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=11080>

⁴⁶ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=22681>

*Сенсационные расшифровки разговоров Кучмы и Януковича! Полная версия Exclusive «Любого можно к стенке»:*⁴⁷

*В России на избирательный участок не пустили международного наблюдателя*⁴⁸,

*Узбекистан --- "дерьмократическая" революция или исламистское восстание?*⁴⁹ *Россия при Путине уходит от демократии: власть, укрепляющая самое себя*⁵⁰

But when migrants refer to Western Europe (quoted usually as Europe, even when the comparison is between Britain and Eastern European/South European countries), democratic governance is perceived as normal, natural and something to be expected:

Shooter –

*...Украину беспокоит исключительно перспектива Украины. И если сегодня перспектива построения нормального демократического (обязательное условие процветания в европейских широтах) государства поддерживается США и Европой - мы этому только рады.*⁵¹

In the mental geography of this author, Ukraine is not yet located on the map of Europe and is in a different region. Participants are willing to accept that there are regions entitled to have democratic governance and that there are others doomed to tolerate corrupt governments or dictatorships. The quote associates the concept of democracy with a specific territory, emphasising the idea that a democratic state is typical and “normal” only in the European region (*в европейских широтах*).

In another thread, discussing whether Turkey should become a member of the EU, a participant called Aborigine Girl states that the European Union member-states are exclusively rich countries with non-corrupt governments:

*[...] маразм какой-то - тащить такую бедную страну с таким коррумпированным правительством в Евросоюз.*⁵²

⁴⁷ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=24414>

⁴⁸ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=24892>

⁴⁹ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=34020>

⁵⁰ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=35189>

⁵¹ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=49970&page=11&pp=10&highlight>

⁵² www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=37573&highlight

This quote categorises European countries as rich and democratic (uncorrupted) while Turkey, in the opinion of the contributor, is not. Other participants also associate democracy and Europe with prosperity; and they also add Christianity. The participants self-identify with the former of these:

Что- Пусть они сначала станут сытыми и богатыми, а потом уже в ЕС лезут.

*Gourland- Турция не доросла (аргумент разума).
Европа - это христиане (аргумент сердца).*

The above quotations allocate Europe at a higher status (*дорости, лезть*) than the other regions. The region is also categorised as a solely Christian territory.

The next quotation questions the pragmatic reasons of Europeans for accepting Turkey. The author self-identifies with Europeans who are referred to as “us” (*мы европейцы*).

Chimik - в общем, скажем так, а нужна ли Турция ЕИ? Чего мы, европейцы, с этого поймеем.

In this discussion, the majority of contributors argued against welcoming Turkey into the EU, but a participant called Vrach consistently provided counter-arguments. At the same time it has to be noted that his position was constructed from the same understanding as to what constitutes Europe and democracy:

Vrach -чем больше Турция втянется в Европу, тем большим примером это будет для остальных мусульманских стран, что демократическая жизнь возможна в мусульманской стране.

And later:

Но почему захват Россией, Великобританией, Францией, Германией и т.д. других территорий в прошлом не уменьшает их "европейности"?

The first message of Vrach proclaims that democracy is not compatible with and does not exist in “Muslim countries” that are located outside of Europe. The second insists on Europeanism of Russia. As discussed earlier⁵³, it is highly typical for participants

⁵³ 4.2.a. and 4.3.b.

to discourse Europe as “us”, presuming that they have been brought up in and are aware of and accept European cultural traditions⁵⁴.

Dividing the world into democratic and non-democratic countries, contributors highlight the importance of the geographical component of such identity: the participants use only the word *страна* (country), rather than *государство* (state), *общество* (society), *режим* (regime), *правительство* (government).

When the migrants' idea of existence of specifically European “democratic” values interferes with geographical reality, the latter is substituted for an imagined map based on migrants' grids of specifications. If the perception of what is European contradicts the geographical realities, participants are prepared to ignore or reject them. The following extract exemplifies this point.

Chimik posts the following message (to reply to a participant stating that geographically Turkey is located in Europe):

Географически формально - да, но отнюдь не идейно. То же мне оправдание: османы захватили центр христианской Византийской цивилизации и сразу стали "частью" Европы, хотя бы даже географически. Не катит такой аргумент.

Further he continues:

Турция - страна не европейская, даже если учесть, что откромсала столицу европейской цивилизации...

It seems that Chimik prioritises ideological features of *европейский* (European) over geographical ones (*Географически формально - да, но отнюдь не идейно*). He also adds ethnic arguments (*османы*), and infuses religious criteria (*центр христианской [...] цивилизации*) in the discussion. But instead of conceptualising Europeanism on the bases of the above, the participant attempts to “change” geographical borders of Europe and stresses the territorial dimension of Europeanism (*Турция - страна не европейская*). The participant rejects geographical reality: he states that Turkey is not a part of Europe (*сразу стали "частью" Европы*) even from geographical point of

⁵⁴ See also 4.3.b.1.

view (*даже географически*). Thus, after bringing in the discussion cultural, ethnic and historical arguments, contributors continue to categorise and map them in geographical terms.

For example, in the following quote Europe is discoursed as a cultural and social phenomenon (*цивилизация*) and a geographical zone at the same time. In the same vein, in the following quotation Africa is excluded from “civilisation”, while Europe embodies the latter: the quote shows that the author believes that he/she is a cultured and civilised person, because he/she was born in Europe:

Африка уж точно никогда не была (и не будет) частью цивилизации, каковой была и есть Европа, откуда я родом. (Smoking ban 18.11.04)

Territory emerges as an important category in a variety of discussions. In the discussion “*Столкновение цивилизаций*”, territory represents the most important value attributed to Russia and contributors suspect all neighbouring nations of planning territorial expansion. In the thread “Are the Germans right” it is formulated as a norm that all guests follow the rules of the hosts, and adopt their culture. In discussing Belarus, the dilemma between ethnic and civic rights is resolved by the declaration of the priority of traditions, native to a certain territory.

It is also interesting to note that the on-line communication space bears the same features and appears to be territorially constructed. The priorities of the “master” of the territory are reproduced in the virtual space. Thus, summarizing the on-line arguments regarding the legitimacy of the Ukrainian language, a contributor discloses himself to be Ukrainian and advises his fellow countryman to “show respect” for the “local” (*здешние*) rules of the private Russian-language forum in which they are participating:

Я сам украинец, но раз мы решили участвовать в русскоязычном (частном!) форуме, то должны уважать здешние правила.

Russian-speaking migrants to Britain participating in the forum, eagerly confirm their acceptance of local (*здешние*) laws and rules of behaviour, which they define as civilised or European⁵⁵.

4.2.c.2. Emblematic use of democracy in the migrants web-forums

Multiple references to contemporary political culture represent a generic part of Russian migrants' identity negotiations that historically have been freedom-orientated and justice-driven⁵⁶. In migrants' texts and messages the idea of democracy embraces European traditions. A word search through the corpus of texts shows that threads where Europeanism is discussed contain also the words *демократия, демократический, порядок, свобода, справедливость, государство*.

The word *демократия* is often used emblematically. Sometimes it refers to a territory, real or imagined. For example, in the thread *о разнице между эпохами ельцина и путина* a participant ironically refers to US arguments about the protection of democracy throughout the world:

А раздражение США объясняется не мифической озабоченностью судьбами демократии на планете Земля и её окрестностях, а тем, что в мире появляется ещё один центр силы, независимый и неподконтрольный Белому Дому.

In the above quotation, the word *демократия* labels an American political doctrine and does not describe the way of governance in any country. Instead it implicitly refers to an unstated assumption (*мифическая озабоченность*) and creates a territorial image (*планета Земля и её окрестности*).

The word *демократия* can also mark a certain historic period. For example, in the thread "*домой...в гости*" a participant suggests that a former Russian citizen visiting his native country should use a Russian passport, because any laws interpreting emigration as an illegal escape were cancelled "at the dawn of democracy" (*на заре демократии*):

⁵⁵ See also 4.2.b. and 4.3.a.

⁵⁶ See 2.3.g.

Статьи 64а (бегство за границу) и 70 (порицание советской действительности) УК РСФСР отменили на заре демократии. В Россию наверняка каждый день из Европы депортируют десятки неудавшихся азылянтов, и России нет никакого дела до того, что они просили убежища на Западе.⁵⁷

Here *демократия* is getting a temporal dimension. *Заря демократии* alludes to a beautiful and romantic part of the day, and at the same time contains the reference to a period of political changes in early 90-s.

None of the above quotations describe democracy as a polity: as a form of governing or organisation of a state or society, or as features of management of public and civil affairs.

In some other messages the word *демократия* symbolically marks us/them distinction⁵⁸. Contributors use this notion to demonstrate that the values of civic society are important to migrants. But for them such appreciation of certain values leads to the conclusion of their enhanced ability to judge what is and what is not “democratic”. For example, the following quote in the thread *Столкновение цивилизаций* (“Clash of civilizations”) assumes that migrants from Africa and Asia (again) abuse “democracy” but do not appreciate the purpose of such social order (*не разбирающихся в демократии*). Democracy in these quotes emerges as a special social life-style of British society (*эта страна*), and allegedly only the host population and Russian-speaking migrants can appreciate it and share its values (*ее считает непреложным законом жизни*):

...наплыв именно афро-азиатов не разбирающихся в демократии, но отлично умеющих ею пользоваться (в силу того, что демократия надежно защищена только от тех, кто ее считает непреложным законом жизни) в своих целях изменяет жизнь этой страны.

Democracy emerges in a fixed and universal form, which can be and needs to be defined in a binary system of othering: democratic/ non-democratic,

⁵⁷ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=40222&highlight>

⁵⁸ See also this thesis 4.2.b.

Europeans/Africans (Asians), use/abuse⁵⁹. The above quotation also alludes to the image of “besieged fortress”⁶⁰ and hostile environment, where us and them are not only different, but shall be separated to avoid conflict.

Thus, in the texts of forums, the notion of democracy is often used to mark symbolically migrants’ solidarities, rather than being defined in terms of organization and management of society, state or city. *Демократия* is associated with *цивилизация*; it is highly praised by participants, but the meaning of it in terms of real political practices and social construction is not investigated by participants; contributors locate democracy (as well as civilization in general) exclusively in Europe, but Europe does not correlate with any geographical conventions.

4.2.c.3. Civilisation and Europeanism: Cultural or Ethnic Divisions

It was noted earlier (4.1.) that participants of the Russian-language Forums impose ethnic meaning on the object of knowledge created by their discourse. This subchapter questions whether Russian-speaking migrants are prepared to accept the contemporary realities of Europe including its multiracial and multicultural environment.

Cross-reference search through on-line discussions⁶¹ discloses that discussions on culture and Europeanism are surprisingly often linked to ethnic issues. Statements questioning the extent to which individuals are civilized and cultured are often supported by arguments based on the ethnic background of the discussants. For example, in the quotes below (taken from the discussion “*Столкновение цивилизаций*”⁶², subforum Politics, www.rupoint.co.uk.), Russian-speaking migrants to the UK discuss whether the coexistence of different cultures could be fruitful at all. The majority of participants share the opinion that all countries neighbouring Russia are either waiting to start, or have started, territorial expansion: these countries allegedly promote emigration of their citizens to Russia. Participants consider this to

⁵⁹ 4.3.b.1.

⁶⁰ See this dissertation 2.3.

⁶¹ See this thesis 3.4.d.

⁶² With reference to influential book by Huntington.

be an intervention which will soon result in Russia being robbed or deprived of its territories. Even having a foreign country as a neighbour is conceptualised in the discussion as being a potential danger:

*...привлечение низкоквалифицированной рабочей силы [в Россию] из чуждых культур влечет большие ущербы, чем пользы. В этом с вами соглашусь.*⁶³

Here the expression “alien cultures” is used in terms of another race or ethnicity. The author believes that immigration to Russia of low-skilled migrants is not harmful unless the newcomers differ from the local population ethnically (alien cultures), the native population of Russia being perceived as culturally and/or ethnically homogeneous. The author believes that the culture of these migrants is defined by their ethnic features rather than their social status or education. As can be seen from the quote this is not a one-off post in this vein as the author shares the opinion with another participant.

One of the above mentioned discussions about Belorussian politicians⁶⁴ shows that participants stress ethnicity or place of origin (*мы, беларусы*) rather than education or occupation to prove that the compatriots are cultured in a European way. Although the forum hosts Russian-language communication, the word Belorussian is spelled according to the rules of the native language of the participant.

Another example is taken from a thread about the use of the Ukrainian language along with Russian in on-line discussions. A participant continues to send posts in Ukrainian even after he has been advised against it. Finally he receives a warning that his behaviour may symbolise to others that Ukrainians do not represent a civilized European country, but “a primitive tribe”, which can not understand simple words:

*Правила форума запрещают посты/цитирование не на русском языке. Таким поведением Вы культивируете на форуме мысль о том, что украинцы - это не **представители цивилизованной европейской страны** [highlighted by the sender], а дикий народ, не понимающий простых слов.*⁶⁵

⁶³ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-42500-p-2.html>

⁶⁴ 4.2.a.

⁶⁵ <http://127.0.0.1:800/Default/www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-26960.html>

The author associates Europeanism with non-aggressive, “civilized” norms of communication. In the above quote, although the criteria of Europeanism declared by the author are not based on ethnic values but consist of the ability and eagerness to be engaged in productive civic negotiations, ethnicity does emerge as an indicator of being cultured. This paradox of discussing democratic, civic values using ethnic or territorial arguments is a very common feature of the researched communications. Ethnically-based arguments are used in conversations about the cultural level of the migrants themselves (see the above quote) and also in discussing distinctions between different nations in the world (thread “*Столкновение цивилизаций*”)⁶⁶. The author of the message believes that there are primitive/uncivilized nations and thus that ethnicity can distinguish between those who are civilized and those who are not. And the “civilized” image is associated with the Russian language and an ability to understand “simple words” in Russian.

To summarise, participants of the on-line migrants’ forums often refer to Europeanism which represents a specific discursive construct. In their identity negotiations the latter emerges as an object of knowledge (instead of other possible concepts e.g. Englishness, Britishness or Russian soul). The participants declare the “Europeanism” being part of their identity, and they specify, delimit and order various phenomena in relation to this object.

The sub-chapter investigated how the object of knowledge is constructed and how the discourse “name, circumscribe, analyse and then... re-define” (Foucault 1972; 40-41) experiences of participants. Migrants appeal to the idea of Europeanism in their identity negotiations by naming, ordering and classifying a variety of phenomena. Europeanism is discoursed in the forums through the categories of culture and civilisation. It was shown that Europeanism is “spoken into existence” by migrants as a complex phenomenon comprising the following readings:

⁶⁶ For more examples see 4.1. and 4.3 and 4.4.

a) As a culture that spreads over some territory, and at the same time as a specific set of traditions typical for this territory. The territory is imagined as Europe, and the vision of it is retrospective.

b) as “civilisation” and in particular as democracy (“civilised” societal construction). This reading also includes a specific “cultured” and “civilised” way of living and communicating - *культурность* in terms of a special set of norms of behaviour⁶⁷.

Цивилизация (as well as *культура*) emerges as a predicate of a territory which is localized as “Europe” exclusively, but territorial dimension of this idea can not be mapped in real geographical coordinates. *Цивилизация* is often described not only as territorial, but ethic argument.

Identity discourse on-line produces a special object of knowledge, (“Europeanism”) which helps to justify migrants’ position in the new country. Migrants’ socialisation within the Russian-speaking environment represents the surface of emergence of this object and provides authorities of delimitation to order and classify the new environment.

Russian-speaking participants naturalise their perceptions of European traditions as an embodiment of the universal culture. It is argued that Europeanism is constructed through accentuated temporal and territorial coordinates that emerge as grids of specification of this object of knowledge⁶⁸. Geography of this object of knowledge is imagined; it embodies identity negotiations of contributors to the web-Forums. Using geographical coordinates, the migrants try to justify their belonging to the host culture and society.

⁶⁷ It will be shown in 4.4 that this reading also comprises communication, dress code, consumer preferences, and education.

⁶⁸ In historic perspective see this thesis 2.3. The importance of territorial identity for migrants might also be connected to the diasporic solidarities (1.5.a) with the feelings of living outside their historic home and of leaving their native land.

Participants distinguish contemporary Europe from what they perceive is the European cultural tradition. Participants' reading of culture is retrospective and prevents contributors from accepting and embracing the reality of contemporary multiracial Europe.

4.3. EUROPEANISM THROUGH THE SYSTEM OF EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

The previous part of the thesis has discussed the concept of Europeanism as an object of knowledge created by migrants' on-line communications. In "The Archaeology of Knowledge" Foucault states that any object of knowledge does not emerge on its own but through a complex system of exclusion and inclusion⁶⁹. Some aspects of such divisions were noted in previous subchapters, namely the divisions between high/classical and entertaining/contemporary culture, civilised/non-civilised "nations", wealthy/"inheritably democratic" or poor and prone to corruption countries/territories. The focus of this part of research is on further investigation of inclusion/exclusion patterns, e.g. the system of othering exercised by migrants' discourse.

It will be shown in this subchapter that us/them divisions reflect imagined geography and temporal dimension⁷⁰ of the object of knowledge, constructed by the migrants' discourse on-line. The inclusion and exclusion patterns are drawn along the grids of specification of Europeanism (*культура* and *цивилизация*). Europeanism as an object of knowledge develops "link points of systematisation" (Foucault 1972:66), "permits or excludes" (*ibid*) and thus actively participates in the conceptualisation of the Other.

⁶⁹ See this thesis 3.7.

⁷⁰ 4.2.b and 4.2.c. this thesis

The discourse of othering will be analysed with regard to the following research questions: how the traditional, binary system of othering is complicated by diasporic realities; what discursive strategies and practices migrants use in discussing diversity within the diaspora as compared to differentiating “us” from “them” outside of it; how the discourse “naturalises” (conceptualises as true and essential) such divisions.

4.3.a. Who WE are: downplaying differences among “us”

Various threads and separate messages in the researched forums are related to the question of “who we are”, which is discoursed in terms of cultural and ethnic belonging. In a way this is natural, given the fact that participants of the on-line migrants’ forums live in the diaspora and communicate with people of different ethnic groups on an everyday basis (Schopflin 1997). Arguing their cases participants tend to 1) self-represent themselves as Europeans and 2) downplay any ethnic, national and cultural divisions within the diaspora⁷¹.

Participants’ claims of Europeanism are expressed by stressing their belonging to a racial type of the majority of Russian-speaking migrants. Contributors attach significant value to their phenotype in order to underline and naturalise⁷² their Europeanism, as for example, do the following posts:

Kvakin: Я по национальности русский (так как у меня светлая кожа и волосы, я родился в Подмоскowie и все мои предки о которых я знаю жили в средней полосе и были светловолосыми), когда меня спрашивают заполнить Equal Opportunities Questionnaire я всегда пишу White European.

Alexey_R: Если я по пьяни напишу в таком опроснике что я считаю себя ethnic Chinese, мои глаза не станут раскосыми.

Bella (explaining the term WASP she has used before): ...Поскольку белые католики от белых протестантов не отличаются по внешним признакам. И если сейчас многих "европеец" сбивает спонтальку и рисует нехарактерные для европеоидной расы черты лиц, то тип "White Anglo-Saxon" ни у кого не вызовет двойного толкования.

⁷¹ All examples in 4.3.a. are taken from the thread “Рассуждения о значении слова nationality выделенные из треда Как это может мне помочь?” (May 2004)
<http://www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-18921.html>

⁷² 4.4.b.1.

Кот: *Если вы похожи на White European, то так и напишите.*

In the above quotes participants pointed out the following features: fair complexion (skin and hair), shape of eyes and face (*черты лиц*), and White Anglo-Saxon phenotype. These features are perceived as predicates of Europeanism (*"европеец", европеоидная раса, пишу White European*) as a racial type, but at the same time they are connected in these arguments with faith (Protestant, Catholics), geography (living in the European part of Russia), ancestry, and ethnicity (Russian). Thus participants construct their self-representation by equating their physical (European racial) type with European cultural traditions and geography of Europe.

Contributors also downplay any differences among them in order to represent themselves as a homogenous group. As shown in the chapter on the Russian national identity, the model of a culturally homogeneous communal society had been idealized in the national identity discourse. The perception of differences as a productive and necessary state of a society has not been appreciated or rooted in the national consciousness. Thus ethnic differences have always been overlooked or represented as dissolving alongside social progress. The traditional perception is reflected in the discussion. For example, Foreigner, an Estonian living in the UK, attempts to downplay the nationally constructed post-Soviet reality. He states that there was no "ethnic question" in the former USSR:

Я одно время мучился этим вопросом, а потом вдруг вспомнил, что у нас дома такого вопроса вообще ни у кого не возникало. [...]

In general, contributors are prepared to discard differences between members of the diaspora. When a participant called Benabu acknowledges herself as being Jewish from Siberia, she shares her doubts whether she has enough reasons to call herself "White European" because her ancestors neither originated from the territory of Europe nor was she born there. Benaby also confesses that the question of ethnic belonging is difficult for her to comprehend:

А вот меня вопрос ethnic origin в местных анкетах всегда вводит в полнейший ступор. Мне очень хочется записаться White European, но если задуматься,

никак не получается. Родилась я в Новосибирске, совсем не Европа, далекие предки из Израиля - совсем уж Азия. Короче пишуь Others.

She gets a reply from Bella, who, after acknowledging that the questions of national and ethnic belonging are not straightforward, simply calls for the fact of multiplicity of origins and nationalities of the participants to be ignored:

Если сейчас настолько расплывчато, то зачем лишний раз от этого отталкиваться?

Another participant called Sumrak also believes that the differences between diaspora members are subjective or illusive, and shouts (uses capital letters) that people of the former USSR share a certain mentality which determines their national belonging:

indiana.jones: А что вообще такое национальность (этническая принадлежность)? Чем она определяется? Генами? Принадлежностью к культуре?

Sumrak: МЕНТАЛИТЕТ

In discussions, covering several cases from their own life-stories, participants come to the conclusion that the most important criterion for defining their belonging is self-perception. Russian-speaking migrants rely on their own judgments, stating that they can represent the culture they feel they belong to, and that they can define their nationality according to their subjective interests

Квакин: Несмотря на то, что я родился в России, являюсь гражданином России и русским по национальности, я не считаю себя россиянином, так как я не живу в России, и мои интересы и интересы России тесно не связаны.

Foreigner, expanding on his own case, states that one can define his belonging depending on what culture is his native one. The participant defines ethnic and national belonging as being self-ascribed, concluding that although he is not ethnically Russian, he is a native Russian speaker and he feels that culturally he is Russian, all of which implies that he is Russian (*русский*).

Foreigner: Моя национальность нерусская, но родной язык русский, также как и культура, и в душе себя считаю русским.

Also in the tread participants highlight Europeanism of their culture (see also 4.1. and 4.2 and 4.3.b.) and widely use allusions to their allegedly high social or educational

status (for example, *Когда-то на сайте одного американского университета, от смотрю на коллег в других компаниях в Сити* (to be compared with representation of the Other in 4.3.b.1).

Constructing their self-representations, contributors tend to appeal to their own life-stories rather than to third-party knowledge. Generalising their own cases, contributors prioritise commonality of primordial features, territory from which an individual originates, and upbringing (native language, “culture”, faith). They perceive that such features are linking them to Europeanism, help to justify their displacements as a group and as individuals. The discourse tends to highlight the commonality of origins and to downplay their differences.

4.3.b. External Negative Other: imagining and emphasising differences

The discourse on othering encapsulates the same object of knowledge - Europeanism (and non-Europeanism in this case), which marks (and makes) the opposite of Us – the External Negative Other. “Them” are immediately labelled as non-Europeans staying in the UK. Russian-speaking migrants oppose themselves to the latter, even though they are also immigrants in the same country dealing with the same issues of marginal identities and multiple solidarities.

The participants highlight the importance of differences for this part of the British population, rather than downplay them. For example, Foreigner continues his post comparing his happily resolved personal dilemma of national/ethnic belonging with the one of immigrants from India and Africa. He claims that they are guilty of escalating this question and alludes to their primordial features. Foreigner describes them as uprooted people without a motherland who are not fully accepted by the host country, and claims that this is the reason for their allegedly being desperate to institutionalise their belonging in the host country:

В повседневной жизни такого вопроса не возникает: "Как определиться?". Особенно если человек живет в стране, где родился и вырос. Этот вопрос скорее всего возникает у иммигрантов из Индии и Африки, которые со страной своего происхождения общего уже почти ничего не имеют, кроме

черт лица и цвета кожи. Наверное, они возмущаются, что их не считают англичанами, вот и ввели этот бред - British nationality, ethnic origin...

It is instructive to analyse the construction of the above argument. First of all the author distinguishes those who migrate from those who remain in their country of origin. The importance of this division has been pointed out earlier in 4.3.a. Then the key question is specified: the sender compares Russian diaspora with that of migrants of other origins. But out of the multiplicity of minority nationalities represented in the population of the UK today, only immigrants from Africa and India are chosen to illustrate his idea.

The contributor is silent about migrants from Eastern and Southern Europe or from the USA. Although migrants from these countries might also experience crises of national identity when they migrate, the participant excludes them from the list of immigrants preoccupied with their identity. He is also silent about the occupation and education of migrants from India and Africa, in contrast to the conversation amongst Russian-speaking migrants who, when discussing Us widely use allusions to their allegedly high social or educational status (as in 4.3.a).

Such selective argument can be interpreted as a Foucauldian silence⁷³, implying that while the author connects “them” with non-European cultures or regions, the Others are also assumed to originate from the poorest (“non-civilised” according to participants understanding) countries. “Strangers” are imagined not only as culturally different, but all non-European migrants are naturalised⁷⁴ by the on-line discourse as enjoying lower social and financial status in the host society. Thus one can see that through using the same indicators, participants construct the image opposite to the one of Russian-speaking migrants. This opposite “mirror reflection” is also a migrant, but is a non-European and of lower social status. As a result this migrant (*они*) is not accepted (*их не считают англичанами*), not loyal (*они возмущаются*) and creates silly social projects (*и ввели этот бред*).

⁷³ According to Foucault, such absence signifies a zone of unresolved problems (see 3.4.a).

⁷⁴ 3.4.a.

Cultural dilemmas are signposted (and substituted) in the thread by physical or racial markers (skin colour and facial features) - same features were used by contributors in order to differentiate between migrants within the Russian-speaking diaspora. But when Russian-speaking migrants discuss their own phenotype, the direction of naturalisation was to downplay the differences between them and highlight their similarity with the native population of the host country. When contributors discuss diversity within the diaspora, they emphasise ethnic divisions and conceptualise the Other primarily being migrants of non-European descent. The label of non-Europeanism becomes the main markers to imagine the External Negative Other in the migrants' discourse.

4.3.b.1. Making assumptions “true” and “natural”: normality/abnormality discourse and discursive practices

Migrants imagine the Other in terms of normality and abnormality, and use strategies of normalisation (as described in 3.3.c.1 and 3.7.a). This process is mostly expressed in their distancing from the “full opposite” which is represented by the Negative External Other - migrants of other origins settled in Britain. Following several threads⁷⁵, this subchapter attempts to analyse how information shared by participants acquires authority and the sense that it embodies truth.

Essentialisation of the European superiority

The on-line discourse postulates the superiority of Europeans. European culture, way of life, advanced development and the long history of Europe (without distinguishing its separate countries) represent the authorities of delimitation in the discourse.

⁷⁵ 3 причины, по которым мне не нравится жить в Англии

<http://www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-27424.html>

“Рассуждения о значении слова *nationality* выделенные из треда Как это может мне помочь?”

<http://www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-18921.html>

“Столкновение цивилизаций” <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-42500-p-2.html>

For example, confronting a participant's message that "Islam is the XX century's plague" Defi argues that this religion is historically young and therefore prone to radical tendencies. In his post, Christianity emerges as one of the alternative social instruments of the contemporary world, which is historically older and has outgrown its radicalism.

Defi

Пожалуйста, не забывайте, что ислам на 500-600 лет моложе, чем христианство, и проходит сейчас через ту же ступень своего хронологического развития что и христианство в 15-16 веках. Помните, какие деяния чинила церковь тогда? Инквизиция, выродившаяся в слепое уничтожение всех инакомыслящих, борьба с еретиками, охота на ведьм, неприятие других религий и т.д. Со временем это прошло, и христианская церковь в современном обществе представляет собой просто один из альтернативных духовных институтов, играя вполне безобидную и никак не кровавую роль в обществе.

Comparing Islam with the Medieval Inquisition and with the witch-hunting of that time, Defi constructs her arguments in a patronising manner; she excuses Islamic radicalism because of the age of the faith.

Later in her post the participant extrapolates such a condescending attitude to the Africans. She attributes all human developments to Europeans (*круговорот западной (преимущественно белой) цивилизации*). Defi writes that Africans have been included in world progress in the recent past. She highlights successes of people of African descent in sport, music and the arts, but patronisingly assigns them to a lower stage of cultural development, writing that they did not have enough time to cultivate appropriate/corresponding cultural tendencies.

Крайне однобокая оценка негритянской расы. Вспомните, что прошло не так много времени с тех пор, как негров на равных правах вовлекли в круговорот западной (преимущественно белой) цивилизации. И если процент негров среди выдающихся учёных ещё пока ниже, чем белых, то это только потому, что у них не было достаточно времени, чтобы культивировать у себя соответствующие культурные тенденции. Зато насколько талантливы они в музыке, искусстве, спорте! А подонков и отбросов у всех национальностей хватает.

The participant unconsciously reproduces the missionary, imperial narratives of pity and support for indigenous peoples of non-European territories who allegedly stand on the lower steps of the imagined stairs of human development (“did not have time to develop relevant cultural tendencies”). Therefore, such a monologue strengthens Defi’s self-identification with high social status: as a more civilised, fully cultured person, belonging to a longstanding national tradition within European culture. The importance of Europeanism and European culture is again highlighted by participants, who were brought up under the influence of the Russian national identity discourse where “culture” (high culture) and civilisation are tightly connected with European traditions and way of life. Socialisation within the above tradition represents a surface of emergence for Europeanism as an object of knowledge, created by migrants’ discourse.

Under the influence of the Grand Imperial Narrative the Russian-speaking migrants dream about the image of Britain (and Europe) they have never observed, but the one they are familiar with through their education (and as such it is associated with high culture)⁷⁶: the traditional, white Britain of Shakespeare and Dickens. For example, Spouse writes:

Дебаты по этой теме уже отишумели, но мне вот захотелось сказать, чем МНЕ не угодили иммигранты. ...Мне кажется.... т.е. глубокое ИМХО... что иммигранты, афро-азиатские в большей степени, русско-украинские и прочие в меньшей, меняют облик "доброй старой Англии", которую мне бы хотелось здесь увидеть. Слишком много, по крайней мере в Лондоне, этой "мультикультуры". Я прекрасно понимаю, что это последствия колониального прошлого, но тем не менее.

The participant compares the contemporary “multicultural” realities of mass migration with an image of “good, old Britain” and praises the latter as her ideal (*которую мне бы хотелось здесь увидеть*). Spouse denies the existence of any positive aspects of cultural diversity, seeing it purely as the result of a colonial past. The participant writes that Afro-Asian migrants contribute more to the change of the country’s image, alluding presumably to the racial differences.

⁷⁶ See 1.5.d, and 2.4.b. and 4.2.b.

Other participants are annoyed (again) and feel deceived by not finding the country they expected to see:

А вот то, что я оказался совсем в другой стране (отличной от той, что ехал) - меня это реально раздражает. Хотя никто и не тянул - но тем не менее – ложки-то нашлись, а вот осадок остался.

Ну вот вы поехали в Англию, прожили лет 30, а там все стало как в Карачи.

In the same way as the idea of culture itself, the image of Britain praised by Russian migrants is related to the colonial past⁷⁷.

Self-identification as local and European

There are several examples in this thesis when Russian-speaking contributors declare that the opinions they articulate in on-line discussions are the ones of the native population of the UK (e.g. *когда это у нас произойдет?* or *Никто в Англии это не принимает*). Various participants assume that their nostalgia for a Britain without immigrants is shared by “all” ethnically-native population⁷⁸. For example,

Defi: Я уверен, что то же самое могут сказать англичане о наплыве иммигрантов из Восточной Европы.

Sprouse: ...По моему мнению, это должно не нравиться прежде всего "коренным англосаксам".

Such self-representation could be interpreted as a desire of Russian-speaking migrants to be seen as the “rightful” population of the UK, and supports their claims of belonging to the European cultural tradition.

Social aspects: contestation and shadowing

Ethnic predicates in the discourse of othering often substitute for social markers, and ethnic arguments hide social aspects of problems.

For example, migrants from Africa or the Middle East emerge in the observed threads as uneducated, low-paid workers or socially inactive individuals (*работают*

⁷⁷ 4.2.

⁷⁸ Also in 4.1.

*уборщиками и пусть, никто их не унижает*⁷⁹), or as “troublemakers” breaking the rules of “civilised” behaviour (as in the next sections).

But in the same threads it is possible to find messages where contributors express their dislike of low skilled, low paid migrants even when they come from other regions (East Europe, USA etc.). For example, participants express their dislike of migrants originating from the former USSR if they are “of low class” – meaning uncultured, provincial, low skilled and badly paid.

Strecozavr: [I do not like] Большое количество приезжего низшего класса, который не нашёл себе места на родине.

Another message acknowledges that migrants create not only polarised but contested social spaces in the host societies. Participant Antonio Rosso posts to the same discussion:

Честно говоря, больше раздражает повышенное количество иммигрантов из Восточной Европы, особенно в последнее время.

The participant is annoyed (again) with a large number of migrants from Eastern Europe, which he describes as *повышенное* (higher than normal). He does not discuss his feelings in detail, but one can speculate that the high number of newcomers challenges in some way his privileged or stable situation, or reduces his chances to succeed in the new society.

Silencing and naturalisation

The following example shows that Russian-speaking participants naturalise their perception of the Other, by incriminating all ethnic migrants with antisocial, “uncultured” behaviour.

In one thread Kotiara and Tormenta express their dislike of Africans. According to them, only Africans speak loudly on public transport and their behaviour is annoying:

⁷⁹ Also in 4.1 and 4.3.b

Kotiara - меня раздражают громко орущие негры в автобусах (именно негры, потому что другие сидят тихо).

Tormenta refers to the above category as *Они*, and adds that they tend to sit far away from each other, forcing everybody else on the bus to become spectators of their conversation. Both participants use demotic expressions (*вопли*) to accentuate insulting images:

Они (негры) любят еще расположиться в метро на противоположных рядах по диагонали, чтобы их воплями могло насладиться как можно большее количество человек.

They are confronted by a moderator Lawyer who mentions that such behaviour is also typical of Italian tourists, drunken builders from Baltic countries, white British teenagers and football fans. According to the Russian concept of “being cultured and civilised”, Lawyer qualifies such people as “*некультурные*”.

А еще то же самое делают итальянские туристы, белые британские тинейджеры обоего пола, подвыпившие строилы из Прибалтики, школьники, футбольные болелы после матча, а в-общем, просто некультурные люди или те, у кого порог приличий понижен из-за алкоголя или еще какой причине.

He receives a reply extrapolating such behaviour to all Africans and stressing their “otherness” from Europeans.

Повторю еще раз. Вопящие среди итальянцев и представителей прочих европеоидных наций - это исключение из правила, а вот выпрыгивающие из штанов негроиды - правило (лишь с небольшим процентом исключений).

The participant generalises her experiences in terms of exceptions and rules. Occasional behaviour of a small group is naturalised as national or even racial (*европеоидные нации, негроиды*) characteristics. The contributor uses an insulting metaphor (*выпрыгивающие из штанов*) and shows no respect to Lawyer who has tried to challenge her opinion (*Повторю еще раз*). The latter proves that Tormenta is not planning to discuss her observations, but already has categorised, classified and delimited them according to pre-existed grids of specification in the identity discourse.

Contributors naturalise their perception of the Other not only by articulating, exaggerating or imagining features, but also by silencing some events, facts and observations⁸⁰. Such Foucauldian “absences” also represent a part of discursive naturalisation of the object of knowledge.

Links to terrorism and criminal behaviour

Exercising further negative othering, the on-line discourse of Russian-speaking migrants associates ethnic migrants with criminal behaviour:

Tomcat: Да уж культура!!! Вы в Пекхаме когда-нибудь были, или в Брикстоне? Будете как-нибудь вечером, расскажите про культуру, заодно и шмалью подышите, там этого запаха гораздо больше, чем свежего воздуха. Заодно и по сторонам смотрите, что-бы какой-нибудь обкурившийся ямайский байкер на вас на тротуаре не наехал случайно.

Lenivets: будет что-нибудь типа, в полном смысле объединенного королевства - Англию поделят на куски и поставят забор - индусы отгородятся от белых и паков, белые от индусов, а негры будут им всем продавать наркотики и воровать доски из забора)

The first of the above quotes represent generalisation of personal experiences, but lacks specific details. The second one is a utopian extrapolation of participant’s fears of the future. It alludes to the idea that only Europeans are able to stabilise/ police the world. In order to stress the humiliating characteristics of the Other, Lenivets incriminates Africans by claiming that their intention is to profit from the world’s problems by “stealing boards from the fence” between ethnic settlements.

The narrative of “ethnic migrants’ criminal behaviour” links national belonging with aggression.

Pet: Негры - brutальные и коррумпированные люди. Их бог, как раз, калашников;)

The next post associates the presence in Britain of ethnic groups with the threat of global terrorism.

⁸⁰ For example in 4.3.d and 4.1.

Lenivets: Эль-Барадеи на днях буквально сказал следующее - друзья Соул Ребела (исламцы) [Soul Rebel is a nickname of a Russian-speaking participant who acknowledges himself as a Muslim. He does not take part in this discussion] вот-вот получат в руки ядерное оружие, и сейчас вопрос счастливого случая - смогут ли цивилизованные страны собраться и подготовиться к новому витку цивилизации (ядерное противостояние террористам), или будем смотреть футуристические фильмы о ядерной зиме не по телеку, а через перископ бункера (те немногие, кому повезет).

The same post stresses that only those countries (presumably European or Western) opposing the danger of Muslim terrorism are civilised. Thus this narrative invokes the semantic triad “European-cultured-civilised”, while “ethnic migrants” are described as non-educated and non-cultured. The participant of the post clearly identifies himself with “the civilised” pole of future conflict. It is possible to note that by connecting violence and ethnic migrants and linking ethnic migrants to dangers of terrorism, participants use imagery and information from mass media sources. Quoting from sources located outside of their discourse, the contributors do not provide any references. The fact that this information was allegedly published facilitates discursive naturalisation. Global media becomes yet another surface of emergence for the discourse on Europeanism (non-Europeanism) of migrants.

Bipolar oppositions, non-reflected impressions

In the thread *3 причины по которым не нравится жить в Англии*, Russian-speaking migrants focused on ethnic divisions in the country and conceptualized the Other primarily to be migrants of non-European descent, as the following exemplifies:

A participant called Peter Pan posted three reasons why he does not like living in Britain, listing in second place “many ethnic migrants from Asian and African countries”.

В Англии слишком. 1. дорогая недвижимость. 2. много этнических иммигрантов из стран Азии и Африки. 3. много вранья про Россию в СМИ (это надоедает, особенно при мысли, что ты сам это отчасти оплатил, покупая твою лицензию).

He immediately gets a reply from Alexx asking why he is not happy about migrants. And after that from Zebra, who asks him to specify the criteria with which he distinguishes himself from those other immigrants. This question stays unanswered in the discussion: no criteria are specified by the participants before the end of the thread.

Alexx : Не объясните, чем вам иммигранты не угодили?

Zebra: А чем мы, выходцы и бывшего СССР, отличаемся от "иммигрантов из стран Азии и Африки"? По моему, цветом кожи только. Те же англичане могут не любить русских, как и других "этнических иммигрантов". Вы разве не иммигрант? Так в чем разница, объясните?

A prominent participant Lavrentij Pavlo half-seriously notes that he likes the architecture of some mosques and he also likes Africans, if they are good people. He is especially sympathetic to ladies.

А чем мечети мешают? Попадаются симпатичные. Да и негры мне нравятся (про негритянок уж не стану говорить). Не все разумеется. Так мне и русские не все нравятся.

The above posts represent internal counter-discourses. They challenge the equal position of Russian and other migrants in the new country of residence. At the same time it can be noted that the participants share similar arguments, expanding on the theme of like-dislike messages and dividing the host population into English and immigrants.

Numerous bipolar “like-dislike” judgments and individual preferences represent a widely used discursive practice when migrants refer to the Negative External Other⁸¹. Some participants do not deny that their aim is to articulate how much they do not like ethnic migrants:

Я сравниваю кого-либо с обезьяной не из-за цвета кожи кого-либо, а потому что они похожи...по манере поведения... Либо просто хочу оскорбить...

⁸¹ For more examples 4.3.c.3.

Emotional arguments and unstated assumptions

There are very few personal stories and cases discussed⁸². Instead contributors use generalisations, appealing to third-party knowledge, quoting media sources or providing links to them, utilising the authority of bookish knowledge. The messages are emotional and contradictory, containing various omissions. For example, evoking various aspects of culture in connection with Europe and the Other, Russian-speaking participants of the web-forums do not examine their own position as migrants in the new country of residence. The participants often use the verb *раздражать* “to annoy” (36 times during the discussion) to describe their feeling. It signifies that they either do not understand the reasons of their attitudes, or deny the reasons behind their feeling.

4.3. c. Positive External Other

When mapping the borders of their on-line diasporic community, the participants deal with the task of constructing the image of the Other, but the traditional Russian cultural bipolar system of othering is complicated by the existence of several Others⁸³. Native British population emerges in the on-line discourse as External Positive Other.

British people are often discussed in Russian language Forums⁸⁴. The thread *3 причины, по которым мне не нравится жить в Англии*⁸⁵ is one of those discussions. The nature of the topic meant that migrants discussed the conditions of their life in Britain, as well as local customs, the host population and its habits.

A participant nicknamed Arisha posted a remark (in capital letters which means a categorical statement) about “lack of soul-to-soul communication” in Britain. She claimed that British people do not appreciate Russians and their culture. She also states that she is not a migrant to the UK and does not live here. Arisha was emotional

⁸² There are only two real-life examples quoted by participants: a fight in a suburb and a description of an open plan office with employees.

⁸³ See also 4.3.d. and 4.3.e this thesis.

⁸⁴ See also 4.4. and 4.2.

⁸⁵ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-27424.html>

and disappointed with her cross-cultural experiences and expressed her feelings as *меня раздражает* (“being annoyed”).

Я В АНГЛИИ НЕ ЖИВУ, НО ПОБЫВАТЬ НЕ РАЗ ПРИХОДИЛОСЬ. А ЕЩЕ МЕНЯ ОЧЕНЬ РАЗДРАЖАЛО ЭТО ЛИЦЕМЕРИЕ И НАИГРАННОСТЬ В ОБЩЕНИИ МНОГИХ АНГЛИЧАН. ПРАКТИКА ПОКАЗАЛА, ЧТО МНОГИЕ ИЗ НИХ ГОТОВЫ НЕ ТОЛЬКО ЗА ГЛАЗА ОБЛОЖИТЬ ЭТИХ "РУССКИХ" (ДО СИХ ПОР ВЕДЬ НИЧЕГОШЕНЬКИ НЕ ЗНАЮТ О НАШЕЙ КУЛЬТУРЕ!), НО И ДРУГ ДРУГА ГОТОВЫ ПОДСТАВИТЬ, НАСПЛЕТНИЧАТЬ ДРУГ О ДРУГЕ ВСЕ ЧТО МОЖНО И ЧТО СОВСЕМ НЕ СТОИТ..... Я ПОНИМАЮ, ЧТО ЭТО МНЕНИЕ О НЕКОТОРЫХ, НО ВОТ..ВСЁ-ТАКИ У МЕНЯ ТАКОЙ НЕПРИЯТНЫЙ ОСАДОК В ДУШЕ ОТ ОБЩЕНИЯ (С МОЛОДЫМИ, В ПРИНЦИПЕ, ЛЮДЬМИ). ДУШЕВНОГО ОБЩЕНИЯ, КАК У НАС, ПОЖАЛУЙ... НЕМНОГО.

Her criticism was not shared by other participants. Within an hour of her comments being posted, Ludic (an on-line personality, marked as “experienced”⁸⁶) confronts Arisha by asking how one can expect close relationships (*душевность отношений*) with a group if he or she does not share the interests and tastes of the members. Ludic also suggests that Arisha re-evaluate her perception that her nationality is of high importance for local people:

Не готовы они "обложить" никаких русских, нет им дела до них совершенно, не говорят они между собой о русских никогда. Может, только если попадется среди знакомых какой странный чудак, которому случилось быть русским, тогда упомянут его странности плюс национальную принадлежность.... Еще. Как можно судить о душевности отношений какой-то группы людей до тех пор, пока человек не стал по-настоящему частью этой группы, разделяя интересы этой группы, говоря о всем понятных вещах, имея сходные вкусы?

This thread started in December 2005 and lasted for 3 months; it contains more than 1000 replies and was visited by more than 60 thousand viewers. Contributors did not downplay differences between them and the host population (as participants do creating the image of Us discussing the Negative Other), but were critical with

⁸⁶ Such mark is received by participants when they either actively participate in the discussions or disclose themselves as settled in the host country for a long time. This mark is a temporary feature of self-representation on-line.

regards to the living conditions in this country, or qualify local features as strange and funny.

It is of special interest to analyse how the discourse constructs an image of the Positive Other in comparison to the Negative one discussed earlier⁸⁷. In the aforementioned thread, for example, Russian-speaking migrants discuss various issues they do not like in the UK: media disinformation about Russia, bad coffee, expensive property, inefficient transport, silly humour on TV, poor health service, wet and cold climate, high taxes etc. Participants discuss differences between their native and the British cultures; specify disagreements with the host population over lifestyle, differences in approaches, habits and tastes. But they do not use rigid bipolar oppositions and do not represent themselves as superior to their British colleagues or neighbours. The argumentation is detailed: various participants discuss their everyday observations, describe some real-life situations and personal experiences, and quote figures from their own personal spending budgets. In the whole discussion there are no links to external sources of information. The tone of the discussion is ironic and relaxed. There are very few emotional remarks.

Thus, the discursive strategies here differ from the ones with regard to “the main Other” (migrants of other origins coming to the UK)⁸⁸. Interestingly, Europeanism is rarely mentioned in the discussion. This discourse is delimited and ordered by a new authority: such as migrants who live in the UK long enough to be able to explain and interpret the realities of the host country to newcomers. Communication between “integrated” migrants, working as interpreters between cultures, and newly arrived ones assists in cultural appropriation of new phenomena⁸⁹.

The categorization of the host population of the country does not fit into a binary system of othering, and British people emerge as Positive External Other in the discussions.

⁸⁷ 4.3.b.

⁸⁸ See 4.3.b.

⁸⁹ See this thesis 3.4 and 4.4.c

4.3.d. Negative Internal Other: Sovok vs. democracy

Migrants conceptualise democracy/civilisation as the opposite to their past and everything they have left behind: the Soviet Empire (or, in some cases, contemporary allegedly oppressive regimes on its former territory⁹⁰), the soviet legacy in governance and culture.

Soviet identity in the diasporic consciousness has been subjected to intense self-reflection in the thread “Sovok”, launched on the web-forum Bratok 23 May 2003 (currently not available on-line). The word “Sovok” is used as a description of a personality formed under the conditions of the former USSR and combines associations linked to the word “Soviet” with a simple instrument that is widely used for manual cleaning (i.e. a shovel).

At the very beginning of the discussion, participants noted the ambiguity of their consciousness. The discussion refers to their common past, and this time their memories represent a part of their collective identity as such. All of them had been born in the USSR (*Даже самый юный из нас родился в СССР*) and they reflected upon their connections and attachments to their homeland. At the same time they believed that only their displacement allowed them to reflect upon the notion of “Sovok” (*Совок замечен со стороны, поэтому его и обсуждают эмигранты*). They distanced themselves from that past, making Soviet identity an Internal Negative other.

A moderator suggested posting personal associations with the word *Совок* to the forum to clarify its meaning by stressing those characteristics that are most important for migrants. The discussion was constructed through the following narratives:

- I. Narratives of Russia as a former superpower (aggressive or nostalgic approaches)
- II. Narratives of the dependency culture typical for an individual in a totalitarian state; an imbalance between personal freedom and personal responsibility

⁹⁰ See 4.3.

III. Narratives, comparing civil and consumerist societies, where Sovok was conceptualized as a universal notion.

I. The key aspects of the Soviet identity are expressed in the narratives of a superpower:

- ...*И есть чем гордиться, ведь полмира нет-нет, а стояло на коленях перед нашей (бывшей-) могучей страной.*

the bearer of enlightenment', big brother' to other nations:

Плохому не учили, старались добро всем сделать...

Images of military force and aggression are expressed in some messages, where the participants often use slang. For example,

Пол-Европы за яйца держали...

Other participants nostalgically evoke memories of a glorious past they view with pride and suggest some respect be shown towards their ancestors:

А хорошего больше было.

Такой школы геологических работ, как была у нас, нигде в мире нет.

Совок – это все плохое, что было связано с Союзом, но там было и хорошее.

Нам было чем гордиться, было. Гадость была и глупость была, но это было не самое худшее общество и не самая худшая страна.

They distinguish between Sovok and “soviet person” and highlight the role of education and a Soviet upbringing in their family histories:

Это был не совок – это был советский человек, с соответствующим воспитанием, отношением к жизни, системой ценностей. В этой системе ценностей выросли родители большинства из нас, и упрекать их за то, что они такие, а не другие – означает неуважение к предкам и истории.

People nostalgically refer to Soviet times without connecting their past to their experiences of migration and European realities. The time they nostalgically recollect is irrelevant to contemporary European realities that they observe and negotiate. It is worth noting that in the above quotations there are no references to Europeanism and no references to democracy and democratic values either.

II. Participants also elaborate on the question of Soviet identity. They draw a special type of personality:

- ...набор узнаваемых, стандартизованных признаков поведения и взглядов, Совок – это (для меня) злобно-агрессивный, подленький, крикливый недоверчивый типчик....).

Soviet identity is associated with hatred (*злобно-агрессивный человек*), lack of trust, envy, and fear. More importantly these features are generalized (*стандартизованные признаки поведения и взгляды*) to those of a personality raised under a totalitarian regime.

Migrants claim that totalitarianism cultivated a dependency culture, and created an imbalance between personal freedom and personal responsibilities. The Soviet identity, for the participants of the discussion, implies a fear of making a personal choice and abusing the freedom of others at the same time.

- А понятие совок ...это иждивенческий подход к жизни, неумение принимать решения и отвечать за их последствия, привычка к тому, что все решено за тебя, и об этом не стоит задумываться.

... Вместо работы и отношение – подождешь, мол, никто ты тут, и без нас никуда.

Тщательно скрываемая благодарность к «вождям» за то, что «хоть не вешают».

The way of discoursing Sovok is similar to the discursive practices of othering from the Negative External Other⁹¹: the thread contains emotional arguments, unstated assumptions, bipolar oppositions, on-line shouting. The thread also contains appeals to military force (unusual for any thread discussing their life in Britain, but correlating with discursive practices when migrants discuss their External Negative Other). There are a high number of exclamations and pejoratives.

The language used through the thread Sovok is strikingly different from the register and grammar of the same individuals when they discuss other subjects at the same

⁹¹ See 4.3.b.1.

forum. This thread is characterised by the abundance of pejoratives (*уворовать, в морду заехать, сидеть в заднице, быдло*), insulting remarks about other contributors to the forum (*ты похоже безнадежно отстала от поезда, если вообще на нем была*). Instead of ironic remarks and questions as in other threads, the posts are full of categorical judgments, pathetic exclamations (*тупые в абсолютном большинстве, предпочитаю быть совком чем западным подциралой*). “Smilies” are used in this thread approximately 3 times for every 15 messages (compared to 11 smilies for every 15 messages in randomly selected threads). There are more spelling and syntactic mistakes, which may indicate that the senders were so excited they did not care about the rules of grammar. This permits a conclusion that this particular subject is still a very acute topic for the migrants.

III. The next narrative of the process of othering is connected to the debates about distinctions between contemporary totalitarian and democratic societies. The participants generalise the aforementioned features of the Soviet mentality and extrapolate the connotations of the word *Sovok* to the modern western consumerist society, and by doing so they recreate the binary system of oppositions traditional for the national identity discourse.⁹² In the migrants’ discourse the dilemma us/them is represented by the opposition between democracy on one side, and Soviet mentality together with consumerism on the other side. The participants include in the category of the Other those individuals who possess ‘Soviet’ characteristics even if they neither live in nor are connected to the former Soviet Union;

*Ха-ха. В таком случае, Англия – это совок в кубе.
...можно прийти к выводу, что совок – понятие наднациональное и надсоциальное.
Это название определенного, основанного на идеологии образа жизни, навязанного многим, очень разным народам.*

The discussion is mapped by anti-totalitarian narratives, but does not contain any description as to what democracy means. *Sovok*/consumerism emerges in this discussion as the opposition to everything migrants aspire to see in public life:

⁹² See 2.3.a.

СОВОК ЭТО ПРОТИВОПОЛОЖНОСТЬ ГРАЖДАНСКОМУ ОБЩЕСТВУ.

-...борются две тенденции гражданского общества и общества потребителей...Большинство населения получает ЧОЙЗ. А уж как они его используют – это их святое право. Но главное, что НЕКОТОРЫЕ его ИСПОЛЬЗУЮТ.

Later in the discussion, participants proclaim that their ideal society is based on civic and democratic principles. But their political ideal, instead of being a complex social construction, emerges as an entity. Concepts of freedom and social responsibilities are used emblematically and democracy is viewed more as a moral value than a system of social relationships.

By comparing I, II and III, it is possible to summarise strategies of othering in this thread. Discussing their past in the Soviet Union as well as the role of the Soviet Union geopolitically, the migrants praise their personal memories. They symbolically ignore the fact of their emigration, but highlight their connections to the place of origin (*самый юный из нас родился в СССР, была у нас, родители большинства из нас*), demonstrating their diasporic bonding⁹³.

As soon as the contributors approach the topic of Soviet identity in general as a phenomenon of a totalitarian system, they immediately distinguish themselves from it. Although they still refer to experiences of their own past, the contributors distance themselves from the Soviet mentality and the relevant psychological type; and thus they “other” (distance) their country of origin from their new markers of self-identity. In the discussed threads the notion of democracy and Europeanism is associated only with the national present of the participants⁹⁴. Whilst distancing themselves from the past, making Soviet identity an Internal Negative Other, participants alienate themselves by highlighting the fact of their emigration. In the process of collective

⁹³ See 1.5.a.

⁹⁴ See 4.1. and 4.2.

remembering⁹⁵ both notions represent Foucauldian absences⁹⁶ in the discourse. When related to their personal past, “Soviet” does not emerge as an opposition to European or democratic concept, because the discursive domain of democracy does not exist at all when the topic is referred to the Russian-speaking migrants’ past.

4.3.e. The Ukrainian Other in the Russian-language forums: internal and positive

Meanwhile more recent examples (2004-2006) show some tensions between various territorial identities, for instance a conflict between the Russian-speaking identity and the new national solidarities with the countries created from the former Soviet republics. This point will be exemplified here through Russian-Ukrainian on-line discussions. The questions of what it means to be Ukrainian or from Ukraine were not discussed actively on-line before the Orange Revolution⁹⁷. But during the period of the elections, these topics attracted the most attention of participants, and the sub-forum “Politics” received a temporary title “Ukraine lives here”. The issues revealed at that time can be classified in three groups:

Threads discussing current political situation with the focus on the future of Ukraine. Questions of national identity and status, including attempts to introduce Ukrainian along with Russian as a language of communication in the web-Forums.

A re-evaluation of the Ukrainian and Russian/Soviet/ Imperial past, and of political divisions within Ukraine.

These issues often intersperse in the same threads and continue to be discussed at the time of writing.

During the re-election campaign, debates connected to them mainly focused on a re-evaluation of the Soviet/ post-Soviet governance of Ukraine. The statements below were typical at that time:

⁹⁵ See 2.2.c.

⁹⁶ See 3.3.b.1.

⁹⁷ The Orange Revolution (*Помаранчева революція*) represented a series of political protests in Ukraine (11/2004-01/2005). The protests emerged as the immediate aftermath of the compromised 2004 Ukrainian presidential election campaign.

*Эти выборы - это борьба народа против проворовавшейся бандитской власти. Которой уже ничего не поможет. Эти выборы - это выборы между неэффективным советским прошлым + крайне неэффективным пост-советским настоящим и нормальным будущим.*⁹⁸

The above message is constructed as a pre-election slogan with catchy, formula-like alternatives, where the past (along with the post-Soviet present) is categorised as non-efficient and corrupt (*проворовавшаяся бандитская власть, неэффективное советское прошлое, крайне неэффективное постсоветское настоящее*) while the future of Ukraine is seen as the opposite. But such posts neither specify in which way the future will be different, nor what exactly would the contributors like to see: the only description of the future is represented by the adjective “normal”. Such discussions were the most active at the beginning of the Orange Revolution and almost disappeared after the elections.

The questions of national identity and national prestige were represented on-line by the discussion about the status of the Ukrainian language. During the election campaign various participants attempted to write in their native language or started discussing “the right” of Ukrainians to use their language in the migrants’ forums. Messages in Ukrainian came as a surprise for other participants: there was a special discussion on how close and therefore “understandable” such languages are and whether Ukrainian should or should not be allowed to be used along with Russian. A special “sticky” (permanent message) was issued to the effect that Russian was the only language of communication in this Forum⁹⁹.

Even so, Ukrainian is still used in the forums, but with the special purpose of making a statement of a pro-Ukrainian position or of a special opinion in the discussion. For example, when a participant quoted on-line an article titled “*Украина - родина дремлющих ангелов*”¹⁰⁰ which contained various images insulting to Ukrainians, the

⁹⁸ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=24891>

⁹⁹ It needs to be specified that the questions of Ukrainian identity and Ukrainian self-representations are therefore inculcated by the Russian-language identity discourse.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=14259>

participant Mykola, who is usually fully articulate in Russian, posted an answer in Ukrainian:

Дуже суперечливо це. Тобто, ідея може й приблизно правильна, але аргументація притягнута за вуха. Принаймні, мені так здається. А ось стиль - цікавий, хоча й схоже це на стьоб. Одне можу сказати - елемент буддизму в українцях є, що таке нірвана - вони знають 😊 "Коли ти дивишся у бездну - бездна дивиться на тебе" (с) міна Ніцше

Mykola criticises some weak arguments in the article¹⁰¹:

It is all very contradictory. It is just the general idea seems to be right; however the argumentation is not relevant. At least, this is my opinion. And here is the style, interesting, even though it looks like steb (taking the piss).

The only thing I can tell: Ukrainians possess some elements of Buddhism, and they do know what nirvana is.

"When you are looking in the abyss, the abyss is looking at you" (с) like Nietzsche

His references to Nietzsche and remarks about Buddhism and nirvana articulated in Ukrainian are interesting not only as such, but because they can also be interpreted as a statement that Ukrainian is just as suitable as Russian for expressing ideas of "high culture" in debates (contradicting the idea in the article "Україна - родина дремлющих ангелів").¹⁰² The nickname Mykola is a Ukrainian version of Nicholas, and thus accentuates the participant's belonging and solidarities.

When the debates on the use of Ukrainian in on-line communications in the researched Forums were stopped by the aforementioned "sticky", the debates about Ukrainian identity changed their focus from linguistic issues to historic and cultural topics. The threads related to the Soviet/Russian vs. Ukrainian past highlighted the fact that a number of historic events can be interpreted differently depending on the migrants' solidarities. The range of such topics was wide: from the Kievan Rus to modern cinema. The most "populated" "discussion place was the thread *Деревни*

¹⁰¹ The translation is mine.

¹⁰² Similar tendencies in Belarus are analysed by Gapova (2004). She describes her meeting with a young Belarusian intellectual who decided to translate Nietzsche into Belarusian just to prove that his native language can be used for discussing "high culture".

*сжигали не только фашисты*¹⁰³ launched in March 2004, where the events of the Second World War, when some Ukrainian military divisions fought against the Russians under the German command, were raised. The thread contains 256 messages and was visited by 3270 guests.

The neighbouring threads concerning the interpretation of various historic facts, the contemporary situation in Ukraine and geopolitical discussions surrounding it include references to the Ukrainian identity, which is stereotyped by participants through some well-known anecdotes or mythologized habits of Ukrainians. For example, in the forum Rupoint, a search for *сало* (salted lard, allegedly a favourite meal of any Ukrainian) gives more results in the sub-forum Politics than in sub-forums discussing shopping, cooking or celebrations. Here is one of such “political” references to *сало*. When launching the thread *Хохлы круче русских?*¹⁰⁴, a participant called Mr Igor suggests reflecting upon the “disproportionately high” (*непропорционально больше*) representation of Ukrainians, both on-line and in the UK. These two facts, according to Mr Igor, represent signs of power and prestige, and he asks why Ukrainians are more successful in life (*многого добиваться*):

В этом году стал всерьёз замечать, что жителей Украины, которых москали нежно кличут хохлами, становится непропорционально больше и в интернете, и в жизни. Данное событие наводит на размышления о том, что соседний народ не только стал многого добиваться, но и явно прогрессирует, выезжая в УК и об-интернечиваясь на своей родине. Это хорошо, и за всех салоедов я рад, но возникают вопросы, так ли это, что пропорционально населению двух стран, горилко-реорле добиваются в среднем больше, чем родные душе блиноеды?

The above quotation shows a participant surprised at the growing impact of Ukraine and Ukrainians in real (*становится непропорционально больше*) and virtual space (*об-интернечиваясь на своей родине*). The post states the allegedly growing number of Ukrainians in the UK and allegedly their impact on the life of the Russian-

¹⁰³ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=16479&highlight>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=17917&highlight>

speaking diaspora in the UK (*выезжая в UK*). It can also be noted that, by referring to displacement as the achievement (*прогрессирует*), the participant symbolically identifies himself as a member of the diaspora. He is not only stating that Ukrainians tend to be successful (*многого добиваться*), but compares their success with his own national group (*добиваться в среднем больше*). It is possible to speculate that this message was posted by a Russian person (*родные души блиноеды*) and probably from Russia (*соседний народ*). The participant does not provide any proof for his observations but, by sharing his surprise, Mr Igor takes this chance to call Ukrainians (using existing stereotypes and pejoratives) “salted-lard eaters” (*салоед*) and *горилко-people* (drinkers of gorilka, local illicit alcohol), as well as *кличут хохлами* (Khokhol is a Russian term to describe a haircut of Ukrainian men and commonly used now as a pejorative name for Ukrainians). He neither justifies his observations nor defines exactly how the status of Ukrainian(s) is growing. Mr Igor self-identifies with a higher, more “civilised” group while, for him, Ukrainians traditionally represent a different social group, provincial and of lower status (therefore not featuring for a long time in the diaspora or in Europe or on-line).

Responses to Mr Igor’s message do not question the supposition that there are more Ukrainians in the UK than before, and that they are successful, but argue with the style of the message. Mr Igor is criticised for the use of insulting names for Ukrainians. His discussants suggest that, to be consistent, he should have used the word “*кацан*” for Russians, explaining that historically this name is derived from “*цан*” (*козёл*) - goat and Russian men had (goat-like) beards, whereas Ukrainians preferred to shave.

Chestnut

Да. Хотя "москаль" как обидное прозвище было до недавнего времени распространено на западе Украины, на остальной территории русских обзывали кацанами (вроде бы от "цан" -- козёл, за обычай носить бороды, которые в Украине обычно брили).

The comparison between the bearded and the shaved in the context of discussions about Europeanism represents an allusion to the historically closer connections between Ukraine and Europe than between Russia and Europe.

Nightcat participates in this discussion adding an argument in the same vein:

На территории Украины всегда проживали более свободомыслящие люди, бунтари короче. А в России - очень распространена надежда на "царя батюшку". К тому же, украинцам всегда был важен собственный успех, этим и определяется больший индивидуализм в украинских общинах, но они всегда могли собраться вместе в момент необходимости. В России же индивидуализм, по моему, был отбит еще Иваном Грозным..... На Украине большинство успешных предпринимателей - наследственные хохлы, а в России – коренных россиян все же меньше.

She emphasises that individualism is a feature of the Ukrainian mentality in comparison with the communal identity of Russians. It is worth noting that she uses territorial and national definitions, rather than ethnic ones: as in the oppositions *українці- росіяне, На території України (НА Україні) - в Росії (and only once наследственные хохлы)*. The importance of territorial identity for Nightcat can be seen from her signature:

Shall not forget the land, Where was destined to be born. But only at the end, Shall find the place of death

In a parallel thread, Mr Igor's message is received with less tolerance and followed by a further comment:

*Ишшо великий теоретик и практик Владимир Иллич Ульянов целиком верно теоретизировал на эту тему. Что там, где начинается украинский вопрос, каждый российский демократ заканчивается, превращаясь в черносотенного держиморду.*¹⁰⁵

The participant accuses members of the Russian-speaking diaspora of possessing imperial habits, which historically damaged the image of the Russian democrats. Such comment alludes to the lack of traditions and institutionalised practises of dealing with differences discussed in this dissertation in 2.3, 4.1, and 4.2.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=24891>

It can be noted that this is a tongue-in-cheek quote from Lenin, where originally the "Jewish question" was mentioned, but a participant changes it to "Ukrainian"(n/a).

As shown earlier¹⁰⁶ on-line communication in the diaspora shadows the national and ethnic differences between participants and highlights their solidarities as post-Soviet people. The above examples demonstrate that such unity is illusory, because migrants from various parts of the former USSR are also seeking a new role for their national cultures, trying to assert that their separate existence is meaningful in a way that contradicts the ideas of dominance of the Russian-speaking identity and the “Grand Imperial Narrative” (Gapova 2004:78). Gapova writes (referring to the Belorussian cultural situation) that “a Russian-speaking Belorussian intellectual is forever marginal in the “Russian” cultural world (a village cousin who can never speak correctly and, even if he or she does, whose topics are too local, concerns are too ethnic, etc), for this world has been shaped by the grand imperial tradition” (*ibid*). She believes that challenging the Grand Imperial Narrative¹⁰⁷ is a *raison d’être* for the new solidarities: Belorussian or Ukrainian (etc.) cultural discourse is perceived as too marginal, too small-scale and too narrow by the former “imperial” audience. As shown above, when any national (other than Russian) specificities or interests undermine the “Grand Imperial Narrative”, an attempt is made to picture them as peculiarities and marginal features.

At the same time it is noted that the othering with regard to Ukrainians is constructed differently comparatively to the practices of othering from migrants of other origins (ethnic migrants, non-Russian speakers¹⁰⁸), not from the former USSR. The dynamics of Foucauldian normalisation is different: the power positions are shadowed, and participants naturalise cultural diversity and multiplicity of approaches as “differences” rather than abnormalities (as in 4.4.b.) in the discussions: for example, participants use self-irony, self-stereotyping and pejoratives referring to themselves (*блиноеды, кацапы москали*).

¹⁰⁶ Practices of othering from migrants of “non-European” origin – see 4.3.b and 4.3.b.1., accentualised identity on-line – see 2.5.a.

¹⁰⁷ Grand Narrative – see 2.2.c

¹⁰⁸ See 4.4.b.

The above confirms a special “Ukrainian presence” in the Russian-speaking forum. The analysed threads demonstrate that Ukrainian participants self-identify as part of the Russian-speaking on-line diaspora, but form a special part of the audience with a variety of specific solidarities, a fact the other contributors are aware of. Ukrainians are categorized as Internal Positive Other, and the methods of othering with regards to them are different from othering from non-Russian-speaking migrants.

4.3.e.1. Territorial identities: земляки – the case of Ukraine

Observing the development of Ukrainian representation in Russian-language forums, it can be seen that it is often constructed on the basis of territorial solidarities. While Ukrainian identities are actively constructed and reconstructed with ethnic and national aspects still being in the process of negotiation, territorial identities (*земляки*) represent the basis for on-line solidarities of migrants.

For example, Volcolex (settling in Manchester) does not specify where in the post-Soviet territory he comes from when he posts a message looking for “наши”. He deciphers this category as “Russian-Ukrainians” and *Соотечественники* (*украинцы, русские, белорусы*), in contrast to foreigners who, for him, are migrants from Poland and Lithuania:

Соотечественники (украинцы, русские, белорусы) в Манчестере¹⁰⁹. Приехал недавно в Манчестер. С [из] иностранцев много поляков, литовцев. Но не встречал совсем наших. Может кто-то знает про какие-то клубы, русские-украинские вечера и т.п. Спасибо.

It is also worth noting that although in his post Volcolex does not distinguish between Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians, categorising them under the general notion *sootchestvenniki*, he does specify potential acquaintances by their nationality.

The thread Киев а-уууу.....¹¹⁰, launched in June 2004 by a participant curious to know how many people from Kiev currently live in the UK and visit forums, at first received the critical comment that it is a strange idea to sort out people in the virtual

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=25493>

¹¹⁰ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=16832&highlight>

diaspora according to their physical “small motherland”. Later, however, the thread had 1941 visitors with 99 participants.

R: Bota интересно, а сколько киевлян на этом форуме?

М: Наблюдается странная тенденция сортировки форумчан по родному городу. Смысл? 😊

The thread reflects a set of diasporic solidarities¹¹¹, and stresses nostalgic narratives: tangible contacts with the native land, such as sending small gifts back home:

Никто в Киев не собирается в ближайшее время? Если у вас небольшой багаж, возьмите нашу передачу, в Киеве вам заплатят.

Я в Киев еду в начале июня из Манчестера/Лидса. Если у вас не бомба и весом до 1-2 кг - могу взять бесплатно.

Metaphoric solidarities with the native land, in the form of collective remembering of the local landscape and expression of nostalgic feelings, also appear:

VGL: помнишь, где телефонная подстанция была (есть) недалеко от Десны. так там была тропинка через лес в сторону троещины. Лес заканчивался у дороги на лесное кладбище, по другую сторону этой дороги поле с озером (троещенским), колхозные поля, огороды и село – Троещина.

KievLenka Вот прочитала названия улиц родного города - слеза пролилась 😊😊

After sharing memories about native places the participant writes about tears in her eyes when she reads the familiar toponyms.

Another argument seeking to prove the strength of territorial identities in on-line conversations is provided by an analysis of the most popular (and “populated”) threads about Ukraine.

Table

“Titles of popular threads (2003 -2006) related to Ukraine with the number of messages and visitors”

| | | |
|---|------------|-------------|
| политическое будущее крыма | 689 | 7345 |
| http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=45829&highlight | | |
| вернемся на землю :) | 406 | 4716 |
| http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=44887&highlight | | |

¹¹¹ 1.4. and 1.5.

| | | |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Британия меняет законы, чтобы не допустить "Газпром" на национальный рынок http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=50645&page | 161 | 2156 |
| украина теряет пространство http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=49970 | 153 | 2156 |
| как донбасс украину кормит - не словами а цифрами http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=49573&page | 126 | 1109 |

Apparently all of them were connected to the geopolitical issues of Ukraine: the special status of Crimea, the divisions between the East and West of Ukraine, the role of Ukraine on the global scale. The title of only one of most popular threads mentions the words "law" (*закон*) and "market" (*рынок*), but the others contain words relating to territory rather than society or ethnicity: land (*земля*), space (*пространство*), Donbas (*донбасс*), Crimea (*Крым*).

Thus, territorial identity continues playing an important part in the migrants' discourse, but tends to be re-assessed to correlate with new geopolitical realities and emerging conflicts.

To summarise, in informal communications of the migrants from the former USSR, those from the Ukraine are represented (and self-identify) as the Internal Positive Other. This fact reflects new geopolitical realities after the Orange Revolution and the re-negotiating of ethnic and civic identities of Ukrainians. The new political border between Russia and Ukraine correlates with the imaginary borderline between migrants from both countries living in the UK. In particular, this borderline is marked by the conscious use of the Ukrainian language from one side and the active stereotyping from the other. The Ukrainians' search for a national identity represents a constant challenge to the Imperial/Soviet interpretation of the Ukrainian history, character and culture, while the migrants from the other parts of the former USSR, participating in the discussions, are still ill-prepared to deal with the new geopolitical reality, which challenges their ideas of power domination. Nevertheless, participation in the diasporic Russian language forum promotes territorial solidarities rather than ethnic divisions.

Summary

An analysis of migrants' othering assists in better understanding of the object of their identity discourse. Europeanism (as it emerges on-line) encompasses a complex system of exclusion and inclusion. By analysing the dynamics of Foucauldian naturalisation it was possible to identify external and internal others. But even within these categories important distinctions between positive and negative others were noted in terms of discursive practices employed.

The External Negative Other for Russian-speaking migrants is imagined to be migrants in Europe of other origin. Russian-speaking migrants ascribe different features to this image of the Other, with argumentation through the related threads being emotionally charged and "narrativised" through generalisations and re-told stories rather than real-life facts and analysis. The discursive practices of "normalisation" comprise labelling, bipolar oppositions, categorical overstatements, generalisations and opinions based on third-party authority (quotations, external links, and additional sources of information). The study shows that this image of "them" is negatively charged.

Participants of the Internet forums essentialise the European superiority and do not distinguish between ethnic and social features within European traditions and "naturalise", in a Foucauldian sense, their understanding of Europe by perceiving everything non-European from the ethnic point of view as being abnormal in terms of culture. Although Russian migrants create an image of the Other in order to strengthen the ideas of their own social, moral and cultural prominence, at the same time arguments referring to culture and civilisation hide social contestation in the new country of residence. Their alleged belonging to Europe becomes for them the most important indicator of their status and power position, and forms the basis for their ambition to succeed in the new society. At the same time the migrants do not discern what the European features are but accentualise what is not European in their perception.

The binary system of othering in the situation of the marginalisation of the Russian national identity discourse in diaspora is complicated by the presence of a different Other, one that is internal and often positive. Although participants self-identify with the native population of the UK when distinguishing themselves from migrants of other origin, Russian-speaking migrants sometimes distance themselves from the host population by direct statements and by making them an object of their discussions.

The chapter identifies distinctive discursive practices which were employed when the Internal Positive Other was discussed: problem-orientated rather than person-orientated discussions, ironic and friendly exchange of opinions with the abundance of personal details and real-life facts, marked by an absence of links to “external” sources of information (in form of references to mass media sources, opinions of celebrities, authority of bookish knowledge). Thus, the British population emerges in the migrants’ Forums as an internal or external Other, but one that has mainly a positive categorisation.

When mapping the borders of their on-line diasporic community, the participants of on-line communications downplay the differences within the Russian-speaking diaspora. But it is argued that Russian-speaking migrants are aware of the heterogenic composition of the diaspora and are not neutral to differences between migrants from the former USSR. This point was exemplified here by the discussions where migrants from Ukraine are represented (and self-identified) as the Internal Positive Other.

The new political divisions between Russia and Ukraine outline the imaginary borderline between migrants from both countries living in the UK. In the on-line communications this borderline is marked, in particular, by the conscious use of the Ukrainian language by its speakers and by the active stereotyping of Ukrainians by non-Ukrainians. Nevertheless, participation in the diasporic Russian-language forum promotes territorial solidarities rather than ethnic divisions. Contributors prioritise commonality of primordial features (appearance, skin colour – linking them to

Europe) and upbringing (native language, “culture”, faith). The dynamics of naturalisation in case of such othering are focused on discoursing differences, not abnormalities.

The dialectics of us/them with regard to the Internal Other is even more complicated and includes an Internal Negative Other. The latter is discoursed as a Soviet identity, Soviet man. The discursive practices of othering from Sovok are characterised by the abundance of pejoratives, insulting remarks, categorical judgments, and pathetic exclamations. Although migrants still refer to experiences of their own past, the contributors distance themselves from the Soviet mentality and the relevant psychological type; and thus they “other” their own past, their country of origin from new markers of self-identity. Europeanism does not play important part in this exclusion, because the discursive domain of Europeanism is not relevant to their Soviet past, but constructed by their migrants’ identity discourse.

Opinions expressed by the contributors are based on privileges and power positions of the past (Europe of the colonial period, “white” Britain) which have gone but still influence consciousness. Contributors are eager to label as being civilized/cultured those of their proponents who can demonstrate an allegedly European upbringing and whose native territories experienced the influence of European cultural traditions. In search for the borders of Europeanism they underline the importance of native territory. Thus geography and time/history are interwoven throughout the discourse of othering.

The “us-them” identity dilemma emerges in the researched forums as a normality/abnormality discourse in the same vein as a Foucauldian structure of surveillance and discipline. Foucault (1977) examines in a historical perspective how agencies have constructed categories of normality vs. abnormality¹¹² in order to draw boundary lines around target individuals and groups and to exercise power over them. In the above examples Russian-speaking migrants participating in the discussions

¹¹² See also 3.4.a.

categorise the Other on the basis of what they identify as natural. The participants themselves police these boundaries because the categories in a way define their social identities. For example migrants “naturalise” their understanding of Europeanism and imagine the others as non-Europeans.

Contributors demonstrate a general lack of awareness of how to deal with and appreciate differences. They reproduce a variety of so-called “unstated assumptions”¹¹³ which stay unnoticed and non-reflected in discourses and practices with which they reinforce their identity. Migrants imagine and “naturalise” what is “right” (European, civilised, cultured) and what is abnormal through these assumptions; they police these concepts by active othering processes.

In a way, the on-line communications reproduce the supremacy discourse that was typical of the late nineteenth century imperial Europe (see for ex. Hobsbawm 1998, Mauss 1985,) when, after the cultural transformations of the Enlightenment, “the newly confident largely bourgeois elites [in the age of empire] came increasingly to see their societies as unique in the human panorama, owing to the special significance” (Alleyne 2004: 610). Participants to the web-forums create a mirror image of the “Other” to strengthen the ideas of their own social, moral and cultural prominence. Their alleged belonging to Europe becomes for them the most important indicator of their status and power position and forms the basis for their ambition to succeed in the new society.

Contributors experience difficulties of perceiving diversity as being natural and a fertilizing social feature. Participants discuss the role and place of Russian culture within the European tradition and construct the culture of the “Other” as non-European. It is argued that migrants tend to prioritise ethnic and regional features over the social nature of European culture. Participants primarily imagine European identity through a discourse of what is not European, implying that the idea of Europeanism is conceptually raw. Finally, it is argued that their understanding of

¹¹³ See 2.2.

European culture is generally retrospective. The idea of the superiority of European culture plays an important role in the discourse.

4.4. HOST COUNTRY EXPERIENCES: CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND APPROPRIATION

Previous subchapters have analysed the construction of “Europeanism” as an object of knowledge in the migrants’ discourse in connection with the grids of specification (4.2-4.4.), and investigated the dynamics of othering, within which the object exists and recreates itself (4.4). This final subchapter attempts to study in which way new experiences of migrants are appropriated by and alter the object of knowledge. It is argued here that the process of cultural translation in the migrants’ identity discourse is not straightforward: sometimes the new experiences and cultural dispositions of the native country exist as parallel discursive domains¹¹⁴, while in other cases they intersperse to form a new phenomenon in the productive periphery¹¹⁵ of the object of knowledge¹¹⁶.

4.4.a. Bi-conceptual identity: two languages- two realities

The existence of two discursive domains based on different languages and related to migrants’ host and native experiences will be discussed in this context¹¹⁷.

As mentioned ¹¹⁸ in previous subchapters, participants often use English when describing their new experiences: names of writers and book titles, or realities of life in Britain. For example, “minority communities, host society”, “social alienation”, “democratic value”, “social awareness and benefits of cultural diversity” were typed in English without translating into Russian. Contributors use English instead of Russian especially often when they discuss different aspects of democratic

¹¹⁴ See also 4.1.a., 4.2.b., and further 4.3.a.1.

¹¹⁵ See 3.4.b. and 3.4.c.

¹¹⁶ See 3.3.a.

¹¹⁷ 3.7.c.

¹¹⁸ For example, in 4.1. and 4.2.

governance. For example, one of the contributors to the web-forum Bratok (ATW) makes the following statement (in English) in his signature:

*"I will give my loyalty to the United Kingdom and respect its rights and freedoms. **I will uphold its democratic values.** [highlighted by the contributor] I will observe its laws faithfully and fulfil my duties and obligations as a British citizen."*

It is argued that English language references to the above concepts can be explained by the migrants having only been socialized in the new norms following their emigration from the native territory. It was also suggested in this dissertation that these concepts exist as a separate discursive domain in migrants' identity¹¹⁹.

Even when real-life observations contradict their ideal of democracy, migrants prefer using English notions without translating them. For example, Misha Kvakin describes that, while on a business trip to the Czech Republic, his British colleagues did not follow the usual rules of political correctness and made racist statements (*махровые расистские высказывания*).¹²⁰:

ИМХО тут населению несколько поколений подряд прививали политкорректность, терпимость и идеалы multicultural Britain.

Я в сентябре ездил в Чехию с группой из 15 британских бизнесменов. После работы они всё свободное время проводили в чешских пивных (и я с ними). Вы не поверите, какие махровые расистские высказывания о меньшинствах на родине позволяли себе эти британские бизнесмены вдали от британской атмосферы политкорректности. А ведь они образованные люди с широким кругозором, а не бритоголовые громы тусующиеся в самых ублюдочных пабах самых стрёмных Inner Cities.

А после riots в Брэдфорде летом 2001 показывали интервью с брэдфордской полицией, которая заявляла, что они боятся арестовывать негров и пакистанцев из за того, что их могут обвинить в расизме. Это называется Reverse Discrimination.

In the above quotation, Kvakin uses several English words: *Inner Cities*, *riots*, *reverse discrimination*, *multicultural Britain* in order to define local specificity.

¹¹⁹ See 4.1.

¹²⁰ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=25801&highlight>

Although in this case the contributor is depicting a breach of democratic norms, he describes British realities by means of the English language. The supposition has previously (4.2.b) been made that migrants have been introduced to a number of democratic discourses in the host country and that these concepts are not articulated in their native language or do not exist in the political culture of their native countries. Therefore migrants from the former USSR communicating in the Russian-language forum use foreign (English) notions to distinguish their new civic experiences because they are not relevant to practices back home.

It is also possible to suppose that the use of English language in such a case does not signify bilingualism of a migrant, but a bi-conceptual identity, where the local democratic norms (as with other local realities) are differentiated from the perception of democracy in the native culture of migrants. For example, a search for Kvakin and his participation in the forums demonstrates that, in his polemics about Russia, this highly active participant of Rupoint and Bratok never attempts to protect minority rights. For example, in a thread about xenophobia in Russia, he defends the colonial policy of the Russian Empire, arguing that although some ethnic groups were forced into the Empire, this act should not be perceived as a violation of their rights¹²¹:

я же говорил "спорное утверждение". Да были народы, которые были покорены Россией огнём и мечём. Однако далеко не все приобретения Российской Империи были получены таким путём. И примеры, которые я привёл, свидетельствуют о, может быть, и вынужденном, но ненасильственном присоединении других народов к России.

In another discussion, he blames non-native, non-European nationals (*некоренные для России неевропейские народы*) and marginal youth (*люмпенизированная молодёжь*) for the rise of cross-cultural tensions in Russian cities. He believes that the ethnic conflicts in big cities are rooted in a lack of separation between the groups, and the ideas of multiculturalism or minority rights he has supported when discussing British realities do not appeal to him¹²²:

¹²¹ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?p=1004333#post1004333>

¹²² <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?p=1002899#post1002899>

не знаю, что вы вкладываете в понятие интернационализм, но в принципе я готов признать, что на государственном уровне в мирное время разные народы населяющие нашу территорию Российской Федерации сосуществовали мирно. Во-первых, на такой огромной территории места хватало всем, и коренные народы друг другу не мешали...

чукчи на Чукотке совершенно спокойно будут уживаться с якутами в Якутии и бурятами в Бурятии....татарами в Татарстане и дагестанцами в Дагестане....все они так географически далеко друг от друга, что точек соприкосновения и причин для возникновения межнациональных конфликтов у них нет.

а та ксенофобия, которая выражается в появлении скинхедов- она, главным образом, существует в больших городах, где преобладает русское население и проживает много люмпенизированной молодёжи и куда приезжают очень много представителей некоренных для России неевропейских народов (узбеков, таджиков, вьетнамцев, кавказцев, африканцев), и в результате тесного проживания и соприкосновения в условиях большого города и возникают межнациональные конфликты и ксенофобия.

As can be seen from the above, there are some contradictions within the same personality, as stated by Billington (2005: 148). In the above quotations the same on-line persona uses different languages and argues in favour of different concepts depending on which territory and what culture the events are related to.

In the on-line migrants' discourse there is a territorial division between Russia (former USSR) and Britain (which sometimes is used interchangeably with Europe) with regards to the concepts of democracy. The political and social consciousness of the researched group is constructed differently within these symbolic territories: not only the judgements are different, but they are often expressed by means of different languages dependent on which of the territories the discussions relate to.

Referring to Lotman's ideas about dialogue between systems, the observed phenomenon represents one of the appropriation modes (Lotman 2001:116), where a dialogue between cultures is not conducted in the usual way of translating and renaming. Lotman describes similar interactions between the Latin and local language/cultures in Medieval Europe, as well as between the French and Russian

languages in Russia of the 19th century, when the languages representing two different cultures coexisted as parallel discursive domains without much penetration and created a complex hierarchy (*ibid*). Lotman believes that such a scenario characterises strong, unprepared “explosive” cultural contacts (*культурный взрыв*). When texts of an external cultural system are colliding with the sphere of a given culture, the impression is created for observers that both cultures are developing in parallel (*синонимические пути*) without any interaction, and the results of these “explosive” influences are not expressed immediately (Lotman 2001:118).

Superficially, the existence of two discursive domains in the Russian-speaking migrants’ identity implies that the cultural appropriation does not occur at all. However it is argued here, in line with Lotman, that this situation is temporary and hides on-going identity negotiations.

4.5.b. Kul`turnost` - I am what I consume. Dynamics of values in everyday life

According to Lotman, another type of interaction between two cultural systems is characterised by the penetration of a foreign features seen as prestigious, new and advanced. The scholar supposes that elements of a foreign culture catalyse cultural developments, but such dialogue between cultures does not necessarily cause deep structural changes. Lotman compares this type of cultural translation with a new fashion: while elements change places, the whole set of elements stays constant (Lotman 2001:73-75 and 117). The above will be exemplified here by discussing how migrants reflect on their changing perceptions of everyday culture: customs, consumption, time management etc.

In every forum there is a special thread where migrants are encouraged to exchange opinions about differences in the lifestyles of people in their place of origin compared to where they are living now. For example, in the thread *Вы достаточно долго прожили в УК, если...* which lasted from 09.2002 till 01.2004, contained 428 messages and was visited by 28,814 viewers. The contributors discussed there new habits, activities, meals, skills, as well as relevant experiences and impressions.

A significant number of messages represented observations of local realities:

Jaroslavna - Если удачная пятница, это та пятница, когда вы поели Индийского карри - чем острее, тем лучше; и запили несколькими пинтами пива

Rasoon - понимаете, что наступила зима по увеличившимся счетам за отопление; не обращаете внимание на цветущую яблоню в начале февраля;

Skyline - нету зимней одежды в шкафу

Tomcat old - если встретив на 90% растатуированного и на 100% лысого человека, вы твердо знаете, что это не рецидивист, отсидевший пол-жизни, а простой работяга, держащий путь в паб, чтоб узнать за парой-тройкой пинт пива, что-же там такого произошло в премьер-лиге за то долгое время, что он месил бетон.

Dolly -завтрак "eggs + bacon + beans" становится нормой;

Karamba - Каштанов мало и мелкие очень. А каштановая игра - местная народная забава :D Ценятся каштаны большущие и каштаны плоские.

Vizzy - если услышав пиликание, вы начинаете перебегать улицу

Julietta -Отпуск бронируете за год вперед

Alexis- Вы планируете собственную свадьбу за год до этого события

The above quotations describe things that are new for contributors due to e.g. the availability of different products (hot curries, bacon, canned beans), the warmer climate (no need for winter clothes, and blossoming apple-trees during mild winter), activities (the children's game of conkers), details of urban organisation (a special sound when pedestrians can cross the road) and new meanings attaching to social markers (tattoos and clothes). They also note differences in social habits (going out on Friday night rather than visit friends on Saturday) and time-management (planning a marriage ceremony or holidays well in advance). Migrants reflect on the distinctive local everyday culture and these observations represent a part of their active learning process about the host country.

At the same time such observations are often emotionally charged and represent a part of their identity negotiations. This process is contradictory. On the one hand migrants find the local habits they observe funny and strange.

Julietta: *Смешной все-таки народ, эти англичаики.....:D*

The above quote not only categorizes the local population as “funny” but also contains the pejorative “англичаики”.

Lana_h in her message talks about the “absurdity” of standard domestic utensils and emphasises her post by an ironic reference to “civilised English people”:

Lana_h *Неужто никого не удивляет, что цивилизованные англичане до сих пор любят раковину (и ванну) с двумя краниками, не смешиваемыми? Предел абсурда, даже трогательно ☺*

At the same time she defines these peculiarities as “touching” and British people as “civilized”. The way versions are put together support their strategies of othering migrants use with regard to the native population: defining them as a Positive External Other¹²³.

The host society in the diasporic discourse is associated with higher power and social status, directly related to Europeanism, and therefore Russian-speaking migrants eagerly confirm that they are accustoming to the “funny” and “strange” norms and habits. The following exemplifies this point with the habit of drinking tea with milk and the custom of polite smiles, acknowledging that both customs are borrowed by migrants from the local culture.

Crimilino *Обзавелись английскими привычками.....) С ужасом замечаю за собой: чай с молоком (всю жизнь с лимоном пила), нескафе (вместо турецкого кофе, представляете??), т.д., т.п. - ладно хоть бутерброды трескать не начала (пока) по поводу и без.....*

Crimilino confesses that she does drink tea with milk and has developed other new habits. She adds that she notices these changes “with horror”, addresses her friends on-line with a rhetorical question in order to share this “horror”, but she is not

¹²³ 4.3.c.

ashamed to articulate these habits because they represent a certain stage in her rooting in and becoming accustomed to the new society. Her message creates the impression that she is happy and probably proud of her conversion, and therefore this confession is read by the others as a proof of her integration and her unproblematic adaptability to her new country.

Other messages highlight differences between local customs and traditions back home. Contributors acknowledge the fact of borrowing and appropriation of local habits, especially when they are related to the grids of specification (“being cultured” and “civilised”) of the object of knowledge. For example, a participant called Val writes that, when he went back to Russia, he occasionally smiled at strangers and tended to say *sorry* when he was pushed in the street¹²⁴. Therefore he reflects on changes to his cultural practices: Val follows the new routine even when he changes his locality. In connection with the previously discussed hypothesis that new experiences and customs of migrants exist as a separate identity domain¹²⁵, it is important to notice that though those practices are connected to another language (*Sorry, Thanks*), nevertheless such practices are “portable”¹²⁶ (Val takes them back to his native place) and appropriated.

Val . - *Приезжая в Россию, говорите в русском супермаркете Thanks, а в метро, когда вас толкают, отвечаете Sorry и улыбаетесь тому, кто случайно встретится с вами взглядом в российском транспорте.*

Several other participants also accept that they have adopted new standards of communication and even criticise traditional Russian behaviour patterns, where one is expected to avoid smiles or eye contact¹²⁷.

¹²⁴ For politeness as a feature of “being civilised” see 4.2.c. this dissertation , portability of national identity – 2.2.e. and 1.3.

¹²⁵ 4.5.a.

¹²⁶ 1.5.

¹²⁷ The latter habit is called “make your face like a brick – and go ahead” in one of the following messages.

Another exchange of messages highlights the contradiction between Russian and British appreciations of private space and personal dignity. Tania notes that it is considered inappropriate in the UK to draw attention to somebody's mistake. Inessa agrees with this observation and writes that the special care about individual self-respect is strikingly different from the allegedly Russian habit of "demonstrating that you are better than the others".

Originally posted by Tania

Вы достаточно долго прожили в УК, если: - Заметья ошибку не показываете вида

Inessa: Полностью согласна с этим. Англичане, замечая ошибку, вежливо промолчат, а это действительно только у "наших" такое качество, злорадно выставить напоказ, что ты лучше других. Я тоже, к сожалению, когда здесь ходила в школу и раздавали какие нибудь leaflets, где была опечатка, сразу, звонко, эдак на весь класс говорила учительнице. А потом мне мои подруги сказали, что мол, мы все заметили, но это impolite и good spelling не самое главное в жизни, а вот человека не обидеть - это надо иметь такт.

The above quotation generalises the lack of attention to somebody's feelings as "a feature of ours", but she puts "наши" in inverted commas in order to distance herself from such an attitude and, by implication, her compatriots. At the same time she refers to her own perceptions, demonstrating that the new understanding of personal dignity is not a straightforward borrowing, but a result of her individual experiences. "Наши" alludes to Russians of the homeland, but they appear in this quote as the Other¹²⁸. By searching for support and sharing opinions with other participants, Inessa demonstrates her diasporic solidarities¹²⁹.

Identity negotiations in the sphere of everyday culture are in many cases connected to material culture and consumer preferences¹³⁰, but nevertheless connected to

¹²⁸ 4.5.c.

¹²⁹ 1.5.

¹³⁰ Consumerism in the Soviet Union represented an ideological issue, and civilization (*культурность*) as a commodity was used in identity programs of socialist Russia (Kelly and Volkov 1998:291-313), also 2.3.and 2.4. this thesis). "Byt" was not an easy problem of everyday life in the USSR. The narratives of the symbolic meanings of material goods are important for the public discourse of contemporary Russia and are connected to the social divide in post-Soviet society. It is predictable that, in the on-line communication of migrants from the former USSR, consumer preferences represent a constant topic.

культурный и цивилизованный as grids of specification of Europeanism. Newcomers are looking for and reflect upon the differences between their “home” values in everyday life and those of their “new home”. In their communication on-line they design a set of everyday habits and norms that they believe are “cultured”, “civilized”, “European”, essentialising them as an ideal European identity.

For example, the following quote by a participant called Autrement rejects as “silly” and “shameful” the habit of wearing expensive furs while commuting by underground or putting on expensive jewellery in an everyday setting:

Ездить в норковой шубе до пят в метро стыдно и глупо. Во-первых, моветон, а во-вторых, в цивилизованной стране никому ничего не надо доказывать: ни шубой, ни бриллиантами среди бела дня, ни Кавали-Гучи-Прадой.

Such a behaviour is presumably typical in the native place of Autrement. The participant interprets wearing a fashionable fur coat as a statement rather than the use of a commodity: such an appearance demonstrates wealth and symbolises power and status for people in Russia. But Autrement assumes that in a “civilized” country (presumably a European one) this symbol will have a different meaning: bad taste (*моветон*). At the same time new social markers do not necessarily mean a distinctive change in the hierarchy of values: the participant is not able to detach from it an additional social meaning with which the fur coat is associated in her system of values. She intends to show that “no one proves anything this way in a civilised country”, but this phrase shows that such a coat, along with diamonds and designer goods (with which she links it in the same line of her comment), is considered a social message, rather than simply a warm item of clothing.

Another post specifies environmentalism as a part of European identity.

Мерседес-600 или пятилитровый джип, типичная гордость "новорусских", вызывает только удивление, "какая не environment-friendly тачка, и наверное, это же жрет столько топлива!"

In the above message the contributor also defines his attitude to the values of “new Russians”, who appreciate (*типичная гордость*) big, expensive and powerful cars (*Мерседес-600 или пятилитровый джип*). Such cars evoke an aggressive image

bearing connotations of suppression and dominance. Emphasizing a preference towards eco-friendly cars, the participant at the same time demonstrates not only the independence of his opinions (*только удивление*), but his rejection of certain ways of power manifestation.

Another message speculates on differences in consumer behaviour in Russia and in Europe (Britain): rather than being proud that one has considerable spending power, the individual strives to find value for money and to be economically efficient:

Вместо того, чтобы хвастаться тем, что купили что-то очень ценное и дорого, хвастаетесь тем, что купили что-то очень ценное и дешево.

Highlighting their new patterns of behaviour, migrants speculate that their self-perception is less determined by public opinion:

Уйти первым с перекрестка после смены светофора для вас перестает быть смыслом жизни.

Для вас не существует понятия, что модно в этом сезоне.

Many posts to the web-forum demonstrate migrants' awareness of the importance of new social markers:

Упомянув имена Элтона Джона, Клиффа Ричарда, Боба Гилдофа, Энтони Хопкинса, Шона Коннери и Пола Маккартни вы автоматически добавляете "сэр".

Referring to their appropriation of new cultural markers and practices, the migrants often continue using patterns of identity negotiations provided by the native culture identity discourse. For example, Autrement posts:

Но девушкам "С какого вы будете города С России" это понятие [she refers to her message about wearing fur coats in public transport, where she made distinctions between civilised and non civilised behaviour] неведомо. Надо, видимо, поклясться на крови, чтобы тебе поверили. 🙄 Как будто от того, поверит мне или нет очередная хохлушка, я перестану жить там где живу, или улица Большая Монетная, где я жила, ей о чём-то скажет?

In the above she lists status symbols important for her: education (she mocks grammatical errors made by a proponent); geopolitical power associated with her current location (which she defined in her registration form as “the richest country in the world” without naming it- presumably the USA); her refined cultural background (allegedly from central Moscow or St. Petersburg). She constructs her message as a riposte to an imagined person - an ordinary Ukrainian girl (*очередная хохлушка*). In connection with the suggestion of the high importance of territorial identity for Russian-speaking migrants¹³¹, it is relevant to note that only geographical landmarks are used in the message; the former are highly socially charged for Autherment, they are used in the post to highlight her status in the native and host society as well as in the diaspora. The Other constructed in this message is a non-European, non-civilised person which at the same time is a Russian-speaking person of low social status, low cultural level and therefore, according to the Russian Grand Imperial¹³² narrative, must be of non-Russian (ethnic) origin.

The above examples contain a paradox between two strategies of othering, namely downplaying the image of local culture and the native population (by finding them strange, funny, absurd) on the one hand, and highlighting signs of migrants' integration in the host culture on the other. But this paradox is illusive: in their value discourse, migrants aim to create an image of a “European”, “a civilized person”. Their messages to the Forum become yet another way of negotiating their self-representation, in line with Nancy's ideas about the relational character of values: “We are here, or are of here, but at the same time this shies away from our immediate way of being. This is not to say that there is a hidden ‘meaning’ which particular means of revelation could bring to light. That model is still a part of our representations, and our history has worn them to a thread” (Nancy 2005: 440).

Contributors who set out to demonstrate that their values are changing do so in order to be able to self-identify with European culture, which in their everyday perceptions

¹³¹ This dissertation 2.3.a., 2.3.b., 4.2.b, 4.3.a., 4.3.b.

¹³² see 4.3.b.1.

is often associated with the host population. Migrants not only reflect on their experiences in the host country, but also attempt to generalize them in a particular hierarchy of values of a “civilized society”. This can be interpreted as the process of translation, according to Lotman’s ideas about “codification” (incorporation) of previously “non-existent” (foreign) phenomena during a dialogue between cultures¹³³. These attempts to understand and copy the “European” style of life are connected on the one hand to the traditional West vs. Russia dilemma, which underlines the national identity narratives, and on the other hand to the ways that migrants intend to achieve integration in society. In the latter process, some values imagined by migrants as absolutes have to be “dressed” in local clothes, “translated” into local culture to be understandable and valid in the environment. Nancy theorizes this value discourse as a universal mechanism: “That which is reputed to be of value in itself – freedom, equality, happiness, existence, art, God, or the diamond – only has value under the condition of being defined by something else (or by its rarity, which amounts to the same thing). Price is thus always an interpretation. To speak of ‘values’ as absolutes thus makes no sense. Values are therefore recognized signs, appreciated and exchangeable in a context or in a given system” (Nancy 2005:438). Everyday practices become a surface of emergence where the object of knowledge is re-created and adjusted according to these exchangeable signs: the participants mark the object of knowledge with their observations (“dress” it in new clothes) and add additional meaning to these markers by connecting everyday habits and decisions to the values of Europeanism, as they perceive it.

In their search for such recognizable signs suitable for communication with the host culture, migrants refer to certain ideals that they imagine are values of Europeanism and are presumably shared by the host population. Social markers (names and brands) of the host culture substitute in many posts for those from the native culture, but they are just features that symbolise the universal values of power and status. These universal values are interpreted (as discussed above by Nancy) as mutually recognizable and locally exchangeable signs. The on-line communication proves that

¹³³ 3.4.

migrants actively learn and reconstruct the hierarchy of such locally exchangeable signs of values, while the process of re-evaluation of the “price” of each of them will probably take longer.

4.4.c. Dynamics of translation: new and old grids of specification

Research on migrants’ identities demonstrates (see this thesis 2.2.d- 2.2.g, 3.7.c.) that the process of adaptation goes in different directions with different speeds. This part of the study focuses on migrants’ discussions about freedom and justice in order to show that the object of knowledge is not consistent through the forums: some identity constructs are based on pre-formed grids of specification, while there are some on-going changes related to the new experiences and new social practices. Referring to Lotman, it will be shown here that ideas of what is “natural” and “evident”, developed by one culture, tend to be extrapolated on the foreign reality during the process of cultural appropriation (2001:646), but the foreign culture itself is also an “active participant of semiotic exchange” (ibid.) and “pump in” new texts, encouraging the symbiosis of both cultures.

4.4.c1. Resistance of the discourse

One of the most intact grids of specification within the Russian migrants’ identity discourse is concerned with the myth of *правда* and *справедливость* (truth, justice) and its relationship with the concept of Europeanism. In a historic perspective as well as in contemporary research (Bazovye Tsennosti Russian 2003), *правда* is essentialised in some universal form and at the same time emerges as a predicate of a person rather than of a social structure: *правда* and *справедливость* (justice) have always been associated with truth and honesty as personal features, rather than with the state of society. Contemporary socio-linguistic research among native Russian speakers in Russia proves that justice is associated with truth and honesty almost 3 times more often than with law and legality (Dubov 2003:255). Solovej studied the “national historic version” of the concept of *правда* and analysed three understandings of it by inhabitants of Siberia: 1) as an esoteric truth 2) as social justice 3) as everyday customs and behaviour. She noted that almost 60% of

respondents emphasised the third meaning (*порядочность*) while, when answering the question whether justice actually exists in reality, more than 55% of respondents declared that universal justice does not exist (*ibid*). Solovej concluded that the combination of the two answers demonstrates that “individual truth-justice is perceived by the majority as something natural and represents a stable moral convention” (Solovej 2003:98). Her research also showed that, in contemporary Russian-speaking cultures, the notions of *доверие* (trust) and *правда/справедливость* (justice) are separated from concepts of *законность* (legality) and *власть* (power): for example, 78.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement “power is connected to the criminal world” (Solovej 2003:104). Contemporary research in Russia confirms that the statement “justice is necessary, but not achievable” is extremely influential. Combined with the idea that “justice is always in somebody’s favour” it creates the dominant approach to the legal system in Russia and represents one of the most pessimistic mental constructs in the national consciousness of contemporary Russia (*ibid*).

The reading of justice by Russian-speaking migrants bears the aforementioned features of contemporary public discourse in Russia. The following represents a typical exchange of opinions on-line (the thread *Фемида и правосудие*¹³⁴):

Gravitus - правосудие беспристрастным быть не может!!!

Alexey R - Как у нас говорят: Где суд - там кривда.

Gravitus - потому как суд, как правило, принимает далеко не сторону слабого, а скорее богатого!!!

Yack Меня этот вопрос всегда интересовал. Спрашивал знакомых англичан, многих, ни один человек не сказал, что английская судебная система абсолютно справедлива и беспристрастна. 3/4 где-то считают, что деньги сильно помогут добиться нужного или лучшего решения. Пара человек вообще заявила, что если речь идет не о уголовных преступлениях, то деньги могут разрулить почти все.

¹³⁴ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=18133>

Lawyer- Тут полного взаимопонимания в принципе невозможно, даже в самом цивилизованном обществе. А где оно, это цивилизованное общество?

The above statements represent litanies¹³⁵ where the legal system is seen as “protecting the rich, not the weak”. The migrants rhetorically question whether there is such a thing as a civilised society. Contributors quote the categorical “knowledgeable” opinions of unnamed but allegedly well-informed friends. No details of participants’ personal situations are provided, no pragmatic solutions are suggested. There are also general philosophical discussions: for example, whether the life of a genius or a hero is worth more than that of a mentally disabled person. Such generalised dilemmas are approached emotionally, but examples are lacking and the polemics is constructed through binary judgments.

When the questions of truth-justice are discussed in connection with Europe, the pre-formed grids of specifications dominate. Justice (*справедливость*), according to the identity convention, is not achievable in reality, but the search for it has always been a driving force for emigrants from Russia¹³⁶. Migrants’ perception of Europeanism, as pre-narrated by the Russian national identity discourse in which they have been socialized, presumes that the search for truth is necessarily connected to emigration, and especially to Europe: justice shall be found only in Europe, just as the Holy Grail in the Holy Land. Europe emerges as a symbolic territory that embodies the ideal of governance and is strongly associated with *справедливость* in various threads. For example, in an on-line discussion of the Khodorkovski case¹³⁷, a participant does not accept the guilty verdict of an allegedly biased Russian court and voices the aspiration that this case be discussed at the level of the European court of Justice. Another discussant, who believes that the Russian businessman was sentenced rightfully, also expresses his trust in justice at the European level, in this case hoping that the verdict will be approved.

¹³⁵ See 3.10. and 4.4.c.2.

¹³⁶ See this thesis 2.3.g.

¹³⁷ Khodorkovski is a Russian “oligarch” who was imprisoned when he was planning to launch his own election campaign. Although he was a political opponent to the president Putin, the industrialist was charged with economic crimes.

AtW: это дело до Европы точно дойдет и там уж правосудие, которое нельзя купить, расставит все точки над i. [...] Единственная опасность - это то, что Ходорковского банально убьют в тюрьме.

Privalov: вот когда Европейский суд вынесет свой вердикт - будем говорить о Ходорковском. а пока, на основании решения российского суда, он - преступник.¹³⁸

In another conversation concerned with the crimes of the Chechen war, a participant called Luxs expresses her hopes that these events will be in the spotlight of European attention¹³⁹:

А то что до Европы дойдет - это очень даже хорошо.

Again Europe is considered as an ideal, rather than a number of states or societies. Justice appears in some way as being spread over the territory. Land possesses a certain political culture of non-corrupt governance not open to bribery. Such a connection is symbolic. In his book “Inside of the Thinking Worlds” Lotman discusses how territory becomes an issue of semiotic modelling, and analyses the construction of space in medieval consciousness (Lotman 2000:298). He shows that geography emerges as a variant of ethical knowledge and any travel or displacement bears religious-ethical connotations. Social ideals and rules are imagined as inherently attached to specific places or territories: “Средневековый человек рассматривал и географическое путешествие как перемещение по «карте» религиозно-моральных систем” (*ibid*). Lotman concludes that symbolic modelling of space cannot be perceived as a feature of solely medieval consciousness, but also exists as such in the contemporary mindset (Lotman 2000:303). This idea is developed by other scholars, for example, Shopflin discourses Europeanism as a cultural text spread over a specific territory, while Dale and Piscatori (Dale and Piscatori 1990) and Morley (Morley 2000, 2001) compare migration with pilgrimage as an ideologically loaded displacement. Usually, borders within symbolic territories are only partly constructed to correlate with geographic realities, but symbolic

¹³⁸ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=34358>

¹³⁹ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=34358>

territories reflect our perceptions of the world, not the other way round: to some extent “borders become us”¹⁴⁰ to reflect our mindset.

Migrants’ forums demonstrate that contributors imagine Europe as a symbolic territory and equate it with the ideas of “справедливость”. Such territory is “not a cultural or geographic reality” (Lotman 2000:330), but merely an embodiment of justice and truth. Lotman specifically notes that this situation is typical for any Russian westerniser who imagines the West as an ideal and is prepared to accept the realities of a European country (*ibid*). Therefore the identity discourse remains silent about the means and agencies of achieving and applying such justice, and does not specify the way that newcomers can assist in the process. By associating “Europe” with an embodiment of final truth and justice, migrants subconsciously reproduce one of the key concepts of Russian national identity – the hope for a “good ruler”. And thus they delegate their quest for finding “truth” to some external agency or body. Thus, this dimension of the concept of Europeanism illustrates that the Russian identity discourse demonstrates its resistance¹⁴¹, reproducing an object without any significant changes.

4.4.c.2. New grids of specification and surfaces of emergence

Justice

The above understanding of justice (“Justice [справедливость] does not exist”) and the discursive practices associated with it differ from the discussions “How the British legal system functions”. Here, general categorical statements that “justice always fails” neighbour realistic observations of the way the British legal system works: the way money may influence decisions, the way the courts work in Britain, the way the expenses of each side are fixed and how to distinguish between a good and a bad solicitor. These questions are discussed with real-life examples. The focus of the thread switches to understanding that no system is perfect and that legal norms can be interpreted differently. Again, as in many cases discussed earlier, the English

¹⁴⁰ 1.3.b. and 1.5.b.

¹⁴¹ 3.2 and 3.6.

language is used when discussing local realities in a pragmatic way. Lawyer summarises his opinion (again writing in English¹⁴²): “*There is a great difference between law and justice*”.

Lawyer- There is a great difference between law and justice. Несправедливое решение против вас не означает, что суд его вынес потому, что другая сторона "богаче". К тому же, проигравшей стороне всегда кажется, что решение несправедливо. И от юристов многое зависит.

Thus, when focusing on realities of the host country, the discourse creates a different aspect of *справедливость*. The new reading is constructed by different surfaces of emergence (legal system of the UK) and new grids of specification for “justice” (laws, rules and legality, rather than truth-justice) are formed.

Personal freedom and civic responsibilities

Participants of the forums are also found to be in the process of re-evaluating their readings of personal freedom and civic responsibilities. Russian-speaking participants of the web-forums often associate the idea of freedom (*свобода, воля*) with independence, the unrestricted freedom of self-expression which is a pronounced narrative of the Russian national identity discourse. Novyi Slovar` Russkogo Iazyka (2000) gives the following meanings of *воля*: firstly, as freedom, independence and the personal situation associated with both. Secondly, it is also interpreted as full, unrestricted freedom of self-expression with regards to emotions and actions. And finally, *воля* is borderless, open space. Furthermore, such unrestricted freedom can be subjectively controlled by an individual: the same dictionary gives the third meaning of the word *воля* as an ability to consciously regulate one’s own behaviour as well as impose one’s power on others.

Contemporary research confirms that the above definitions of freedom as *воля* still constitute the main meaning of the concept in Russia today (Bazovye tsennosti rossiian, 2003). In the host country, migrants are introduced to the idea that freedom is tightly connected with social responsibility (Williams 1976:115-116). Such a clash of perceptions represents a topic for a discussion in the thread *Сколько осталось*

¹⁴² 4.5.a, 4.1. and 3.7.c.

демократического в юк?¹⁴³ (with 213 participants and 6,084 visitors). A participant called Tasya, an active contributor and a newcomer to Britain, suspects that the government abuses freedom of individuals when it imposes norms of social behaviour and a healthy lifestyle on people. She believes that ideally this should be a matter of individual choice. She does not want to be protected against her own will and feels that she will be happy if she can indulge in drinking, smoking, following an unhealthy diet, and even dying of cancer as a result:

Ну теперь, после того мы все дружно должны бросить курить, пить, с помощью известного повара, надо начинать переходить на овощи.[...] Всем сидеть дома, читать книжки, по выходным культпоходы в лес и будет нам всем счастье. [...]

Буду пить, буду курить жрать чистый холестерин и умру толстой от рака, но зато счастливой. [...]

Expounding her arguments, she uses words *раздражать*, *бесить* (annoy), pointing out that her reaction is more emotional than rational¹⁴⁴, and alluding to the associations between this guidance and the lack of freedom in the USSR.

Честно говоря, меня уже немножко бесит такая "почти не навязчивая забота" государства. Всё это почему-то мне напоминает старый добрый Советский Союз с его планами, инициативами и "управдом-друг человека".

[...] При том что власти ужасно опасаются дискриминации, почему-то у меня создаётся впечатление, что из нас всех хотят сделать здоровых голубоглазых блондинов.

The last sentences refer to the ideal physical type of the German fascists (*здоровых голубоглазых блондинов*) and to Soviet policies of control over private life. These references generalise Tasya's idea that the role of a state in one's private life shall not be enforceable.

In terms of form, Tasya's post is similar to litanies. This form of communication was studied by Ries during Perestroika. The special rhetorical features of such a construction comprise the lack of a pragmatic solution, the combination of a variety

¹⁴³ <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=40790>

¹⁴⁴ 4.3.d.

of allusions and stories in one statement, generalization of self-identification (use of “us” along with or instead of I, e.g. *мы все дружно должны, из нас всех хотят сделать*) and the lack of any address towards which the message is aimed. Ries noted an abundance of such litanies in Perestroika public discourse. At the same time some elements in Tasya’s passage are different from those identified by Ries: it is not fatalistic or sorrowful, nor does it refer to the past.

Importantly, Tasya’s message was not supported by the other participants who highlighted the ideas of civic compromise for the benefit of society and the sake of the individual. The contributors switched the focus of the conversation from the state-individual conflict to the balance of individual responsibilities and the rights. For example,

Тася, а я вот не курю и не курил никогда. почему я должен страдать даже стоя на платформе в ожидании электрички, обдуваемый никотиновыми клубами?

и с едой - по-моему на этом самом форуме постоянно обсасывают, как плохо выглядят многие британцы, какие они толстые и тп. предлагается метод улучшения этой ситуации. в чем проблема?

CDarwin underlines the absurdity of attempting to live “as one likes” and to “do anything one likes”:

"Я не курю, но считаю, что право жить как ему нравится (ну в пределах легального) даровано человеку от рождения." Значит запрети законодательный орган курение - проблема была бы решена. Мне от рождения нравятся девушки, значит ли это что я имею право реализовать это мое желание в отношении любой, как, где и когда пожелаю?

А я не против технически исправных автомобилей, с работающими тормозами и проверенным выхлопом, к тому же, не против того, чтобы ими управляли люди, имеющие государственное разрешение.

He puts the word *демократия* in brackets in order to highlight that Tasya’s position does not fit his understanding of civil responsibilities in a free society. In order to explain the idea of civil compromise as the freedom of individuals being balanced with the responsibilities of members of society, CDarwin further develops the

argumentation scheme of Tasya and shows the potentially catastrophic consequences of accepting ultimate personal freedom as a ruling principle of a society:

Но, говоря словами поборницы за "демократию" Таси, у меня создалось впечатление, что регуляция автотранспорта приняла какой-то насильственный характер со стороны властей. Пусть люди сами решают на какой машине ехать, каким стандартам безопасности и экологической чистоты ей отвечать, кому и в каком виде ее водить, с какой скоростью, естественно. Пусть люди живут как хотят и сгорят в страшной аварии из-за неисправности в электропроводке, пробив голову лобовое стекло, это их выбор.

Another participant called Deboshir highlights the importance of channelling individual disappointment into forms of communication acceptable by society (for example, in the form of public statements, media presentations or letters to individuals in the establishment):

*Чего это Вы Тасенька губки надуваете? Вам не нравится политика правительства? Так пишите письмо Тони, жгите глаголом и т.д. и т.п.
Что плохого Вы видите в стремлении государства сделать своих граждан здоровее? Может и героин стоит разрешить тогда, типа каждый живёт как нравится?*

Those who confront Tasya address their messages to her personally and ironically develop Tasya's ideas to highlight the absurdity of unlimited personal freedom in a society.

Messages sent to the thread connect the issues of individual freedom with the questions of social rights and social guarantees a society provides. For example, there were 22 threads containing references to the situation of disabled people in the UK and in Russia. Usually, the issue arises in the middle of discussions on a distant topic, when somebody asks, why there are so many disabled people in the streets is frequently discussed in several forums, or post a supposition that the number of people with disabilities is higher in the UK than in Russia. During an exchange of messages that follow contributors come to an understanding that the number of such people in public places in the UK is a result of local policies aimed at ensuring the

rights of minorities and protecting their freedom¹⁴⁵, while back home this group of population is “sentenced” to an enclosed living by the lack of such policies. Under the influence of the host social realities contributors stress the importance of civic compromise. Thus, participants of forums are found to be in a learning process through their new experiences.

To summarise, by discussing everyday experiences and making them “understandable” for the on-line community, the participants are engaged in the process of semiotic “translation” of new cultural phenomena. The dialogue between cultures allows appropriating the latter into the object of knowledge and their identity discourse at large. The incorporation goes in different directions with different speeds, and the modes of cultural appropriation differ as well: 1) creation of different discursive domains based on different languages and related to bi-conceptual identity, 2) appropriation of new cultural markers which catalyses the process of “translation” 3) re-negotiation and revision of pre-existing concepts and perceptions.

In their everyday identity negotiations, participants discuss on-line their experiences of resettlement. Their experiences represent a field of “initial differentiation” where the discourse “finds its way of limiting its domain, [...] of giving a status to an object” (Foucault 1972:41). The study shows that, in some cases, the identity discourse is challenged and partly undermined by the creation of new grids of specification, while there are some areas where the identity discourse is still resistant to any dialogue with the host culture.

4.5. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Europeanism as an Object of Knowledge

Discoursing the domains of the national present, the national past and the national continuity participants self-identify with both the native as well as the host country (Wodak 2000) and often refer to “Europe”, “European”, “Europeanism” in their

¹⁴⁵ For example, <http://www.rupoint.co.uk/showthread.php?t=43365&highlight>

discussions. Such reference was not completely unexpected, because historically images of the West and Europe have been used by various political and ideological movements to describe Russian national specificity and played a formative role in the Russian national identity discourse.

Although the West in this formula has only been vaguely defined geographically and ethnically, it has been conceptualised as being culturally distinguished with a variety of positive and negative associations. Whilst the West has been praised for its dynamism, industrial development, technological superiority and longstanding tradition of education and civility, it has been imagined to be a vicious and unreliable Other, taking advantage of Russia's innocence and generic kindness. The Soviet regime constructed the concept of the West through social, economic and cultural alternatives, imposing a highly emotional, almost irrational attitude to the image of the West. The official Soviet discourse constitutionalized the West as an opposite pole in all spheres of life, and thus spawned non-official discourses that interpret the West as an ideal of economic wealth and political freedoms, an embodiment of human rights. The West has been the defining concept for Russian-speaking migrants, fleeing from the Soviet Union to Western countries¹⁴⁶.

It is important to note that in the analyzed discussion the West was distinguished from the idea of Europe. The West was still imagined through negative associations and kept its ambiguity, while Europe obtains solely positive associations. It was argued that Europeanism emerged in the on-line discourse as an object of knowledge created by participants. They specify, delimit, and classify everything in relation to this object.

In depth analysis of threads showed that Europe was not clearly defined in geographical or historical terms, neither in terms of institutions or governance, but rather imagined by participants to reflect their identity negotiations in territorial,

¹⁴⁶ See 2.4.

religious, cultural, civic and ethnic (the latter often being confused with religious and cultural) terms.

Participants did not distinguish between various national traditions within Europe, nor did they separate contemporary Britain from continental Europe. Territory (Land) emerges in the discourse not in a real geographic interpretation, but as a symbolically charged argument. It is argued that none of the territories is mapped and defined in a geographic sense, but culture, “civilisation” and traditions are attributed to a specific, but loosely defined, land. Such symbolic lands were seen as possessing certain dominant powers intimately linked (or not linked at all) with *цивилизация* and *культура*.

Both concepts were seen in the study as grids of specification for the object of knowledge. They were provided as such by the Russian national identity discourse¹⁴⁷, and the latter represents a surface of emergence for Europeanism. *Цивилизация* is decoded as *демократия* and *культурность*. It emerges in the discussions as a predicate of imagined territory of Europe, which can be linked to colonial construction of the world. The ideas of *культура* are also inculcated by retrospective perception of the world.

The “Grand Imperial Narrative” of Russian-language communications categorizes culturally prestigious phenomena as European, whereas the rest is labelled provincial or non-European. Participants construct cultural authority not only as geographically limited to an imagined territory of Europeanism, but related solely to achievements of the past. Only “classical names” from *европейская культура* delimit participants’ categorization of real and low culture.

By reducing the concept of Europeanism to classical authorities, participants substitute the realities of Europe by a rigid mental structure conceptualized as

¹⁴⁷ 1.5.d and 2.3.b, 2.3.c., 2.4.a, 2.4.b.

цивилизация and *культура*, which is not able to accommodate for contemporary realities of national and ethnic diversity on the continent.

To create a reductive reading of the concept of Europe in the aforementioned manner, participants use discursive strategies of naturalization and silencing. They have to ignore some realities to prove that their assumptions are true, natural and normal: contributors do not “notice” or accept any facts or tendencies that do not fit their object of knowledge.

Complex System of Othering

Naturalisation is tightly connected with a complex system of exclusion and inclusion, created and promoted by the discourse. It was found that the othering in the researched media is more complex than simple us/them division, and includes positive and negative categorizations. As a result, the study uses the following typology: Internal Positive Other (exemplified by Ukrainians on-line), Internal Negative Other (Sovok), External Positive Other (native British population) and External Negative Other (migrants of non-European decent settling in different countries of Europe including the UK)¹⁴⁸. These findings will be briefly observed here.

Internal Positive Other

When mapping the borders of their on-line diasporic community, the participants of on-line communications downplay the differences within their on-line community. At the same time migrants’ self-representations are further complicated by ethnically and nationally heterogeneous composition of the diaspora. The simple awareness of such heterogeneity tends to develop into symbolically and pragmatically marked identification of the Internal (positive) Other. In my study this type of othering was exemplified by discussion of threads related to Ukraine. It was noted that the

^{148 148} It is important to specify that more than four groups of population can be distinguished (for example, not only Ukrainians can represent Internal Positive Other in the migrants’ discourse, but due to space restrictions of a PhD thesis, they were not investigated in this study). Anyway, it is argued here that those groups can still be classified using the typology suggested in this study depending on the way these groups are “naturalised” by the on-line discourse.

borderline in this case was marked, in particular, by the conscious use of the Ukrainian language by its speakers and by the active stereotyping of Ukrainians by non-Ukrainians.

Internal Negative Other

The Soviet past in general, and a special type of personality which is defined as Sovok and is associated with this past, represents a Negative Internal Other for the participants. This Other is internal, because the Russian-speaking migrants feel connected to their country by their memories, upbringing and current connections. However Sovok is conceptualized as negative Other because of associations with various deficiencies: lack of democracy, personal and intellectual dependency.

External Positive Other

External Positive Other is represented in the study by the native population of the UK. The dialectics of us/them in this case is even more complicated. Although participants self-identify with the native population of the UK when distinguishing themselves from migrants of other origin, they distance themselves from the host population by direct statements and by making the latter a topic of discussions, especially when focusing on everyday life.

External Negative Other

It is argued here that the image of External Negative Other (the main Other) is created by the discourse on-line to support migrants' claims of "rightful" re-settlement and highlight their alleged cultural and social credibility. Migrants of non-European origins are discourses as External Negative Other. They are defined as ethnically different, but imagined as culturally deficient, socially deprived and misusing the advantages of *цивілізація* and *культура*.

The object of knowledge and its naturalisation continue playing an important part in the process of Othering. For example, contributors distinguish between *us* and *them* depending on the way people dress and behave in their everyday life, but generalize

their choices by drawing the borderline of Europeanism (in territorial and social sense) or by alluding to “Europeanism” of intellectual traditions and governance. Interestingly, participants change geographical borders of Europeanism depending on how they define us/them distinctions in a particular thread. For example, contributors exclude Soviet Union (Russia) from the territory of Europe on several occasions (for example, when they discuss Sovok¹⁴⁹), although they generally insist on belonging of their native culture to Europeanism. In another group of threads the object of knowledge determines the othering: contributors solidarise with the native population (External Positive Other) when the former justify their belonging to Europeanism, but other from the hosts when discussing everyday observations. Such shifting borders of different Others justify my argument that Europeanism as an object of knowledge is discursively constructed and open to reconstruction by the discourse.

Migrants defend their assumptions and exercise the othering using a range of discursive practices. The study singles out a number of such practices¹⁵⁰. For example, it was specified that the object of knowledge was created and supported not only by the articulation, but also by silencing of a particular argument¹⁵¹. Through these practices the object of knowledge acquires authority and embodies truth for the migrants.

Cultural Appropriation

As it was stated at the beginning of this section, the Russian national identity discourse and migrants’ socialization within the Russian-speaking environment represent the surfaces of emergence of Europeanism as an object of knowledge and provides authorities of delimitation to order and classify the new environment. At the same time the thesis found out that these discursive conventions are challenged by the process of accustoming and learning during the process of resettlement; and such cultural appropriation may have different forms and time patterns. Following Lotman,

¹⁴⁹ See 4.3.d.

¹⁵⁰ In detail 4.3.b.1.

¹⁵¹ Examples of silencing can be found in 4.1., 4.2, 4.3.

the study examined in which way new experiences of migrants might alter the object of knowledge.

It was noted that sometimes new experiences and cultural dispositions of the native country exist for a long time as parallel discursive domains, often marked by the use of different languages¹⁵².

Sometimes new social and cultural markers are connected to grids of specification of the object of knowledge (being cultured and civilized), they are appropriated by the migrant's identity discourse in a more straightforward manner, catalyze changes.¹⁵³

The third type of appropriation of new cultural phenomena is connected to migrants' participation in new social practices. Such form of cultural translation was exemplified in the thesis by discussions about legality, justice, and social responsibilities and creation of new grids of specification through new experiences.¹⁵⁴

In this case a new phenomenon in the productive periphery¹⁵⁵ of the object of knowledge¹⁵⁶ is formed by the new surfaces of emergence: social and professional practices in the host country.

4.6. CONCLUSION

The thesis has analysed the process of re-negotiation of identity by the Russian-speaking migrants in the UK as represented through their virtual communication. Here the main findings of the research will be discussed and some suggestions for future research will be formulated.

¹⁵² 4.4.a.

¹⁵³ As shown in 4.4.b, they are often connected to material culture and consumer preferences of migrants.

¹⁵⁴ 4.4.c, and 4.4. d

¹⁵⁵ See 3.4. this thesis.

¹⁵⁶ See 3.3. this thesis.

First, methodological, corpus and social limitations will be discussed. Second, the ethical issues and the role of the researcher will be assessed. Third, the main findings of my experiment will be described. And finally, the thesis will be assessed as an interdisciplinary study, and possibilities of further research will be delineated.

I

Methodologically, this study adopted the critical theory stand which accepts that knowledge is always partial, and a researcher within this tradition aims at investigating the meaning and significance of phenomena rather than predicting their developments (Banister *et al* 1994)¹⁵⁷.

Conceptually it was accepted that contributors were drawn on-line by the feeling of “likeliness” and possibilities of identification with others¹⁵⁸ (although individual differences were not ignored and personal contributions were accounted for): on-line discussions were rooted in similar experiences of participants and memories of the native land, informed by realities of the host country and conditioned by the use of the same language. Mediated electronic communications of Russian-speaking migrants have appeared a consistent source of data to research identity negotiations of this group of new settlers in the UK. Drawing on scholarship extant at the time of writing it was accepted that migrants’ self-representation on-line reflects their real-life identity, and their national belonging is salient under conditions of virtual communication. The study provided evidence that on-line communications of Russian-speaking migrants represented an important diasporic practice, even in comparison with other national communities in the UK¹⁵⁹. This allowed me to approach migrants’ discourse on-line as collective self-representation, justified the use of chosen data for my investigation and validated further generalisations¹⁶⁰.

¹⁵⁷ In comparison in the tradition of postpositivism (see Smith 1998) knowledge is understood to be objective and universal, allowing accurate predictions and direct extrapolations (and even interventions) to be made through established relationships. In this tradition, knowledge is perceived as being unaffected by any personal bias or individuality of a researcher.

¹⁵⁸ 3.6. and 2.5 c, b.

¹⁵⁹ 3.7.

¹⁶⁰ See the Introduction.

However, as stated in the Introduction, there were several limitations attached to this study, and they will be discussed here.

One group of limitations was related to the fact that web-forum as a medium is not completely transparent in terms of audience, internal structure, and product. Research of social status and finances of those who create and moderate these public spaces is in its very early stage. It was taken into account that although on-line discussions tended to be perceived as ex-territorial and public, they were none the less attached to specific providers; participants had to act within prescribed rules; and on-line behaviour was controlled by moderators. In order to minimise these limitations, several criteria were elaborated to compile the most suitable list of sources¹⁶¹. Open access forums with active public participation, established practice of post-moderation and a wide range of discussion topics were sampled for the examination.

Another group of limitations was attached to social characteristics of the audience/ participants, such as restricted access to Internet connection for some members of the diaspora, as well as age, gender and occupation limitations. The questions of social representativity and further generalisations of my findings had to be addressed with regard to them. Information about social, professional and physical characteristics of participants was collected and presented in the thesis. This information demonstrated wide social representation on-line¹⁶². But due to the lack of data about Russian-speaking population in the UK in general and certain opacity of on-line identity, it was impossible to create a sample representative for the whole diaspora in the UK. The decision was made to include information about social characteristics of participants (as represented on-line) in the body of the text, but not to use such data was for the sampling purposes. A sampling frame was designed to identify the most popular and active discussions, while social characteristics of participants (as represented on-line) were exempt from the sampling frame.

¹⁶¹ 3.8.a and 3.8.b.

¹⁶² 3.8., 3.9.

Generalisations were made in terms of migrants to the UK, communicating on-line, rather than the whole Russian-speaking diaspora settled in the country.

The third group of limitations was related to Internet forums being dynamic, non-linear, constantly growing bodies of texts. They were continually in a process of discourse production, but had to be represented in a certain fixed form for the purposes of research¹⁶³. The intensity of communication on-line and level of participation differed dramatically from day to day. Also, on-line data was necessarily situated within specific information contexts¹⁶⁴. In this thesis such content and activity fluctuations were minimised by the length of the study: texts were collected during several years, and the same criteria were applied for eligibility of specific discussions during the whole period of study.

And finally, this study accounted for the on-line data being too rich and accepted that it could not be exhausted. Self-representation on-line has combined visual (e.g. avatars, signatures) and textual (message, the signature, motor) features. At the time of writing due to technological issues only texts of messages were archiveable and therefore accountable for the purpose of this research¹⁶⁵. Thus, the decision was made to reduce analysis to textual material solely.

II

Certain considerations were attached to the personality and activities of the researcher. The critical theory highlights that individuality of the researcher influences both the process of data collection and its interpretation.

¹⁶³ For example, whereas a traditional periodical or book is published in a finished and structured form, on-line discussions are conducted simultaneously, and do not exist in a final form

¹⁶⁴ For example, the events of September 11th, the tragedy of Beslan and the explosions on the London underground interrupted the flow of various discussions, increased the number of discussions related to Muslim or racial issues, and might have influenced the sample.

¹⁶⁵ Some other features, combining textual and visual means of self-representation, such as a motto or a signature, were not archiveable.

In order to minimise influence on data collection and to avoid reactivity of the data, the researcher refrained from communication on-line in the discussions chosen for the analyses, thus ensuring that data was collected intact.

The researcher was aware that any interpretative study reflected a particular world-view of the scholar and it was not possible to claim total personal neutrality during the long contact of the researcher with the data¹⁶⁶. All care has been taken to minimise the impact of any possible personal bias. Although the dangers of subjectivity should not be exaggerated, it is important to appreciate the possible implications for this particular study. The study was conducted by a native Russian-speaker, brought up in the USSR and at the time of writing resided outside of her native territory. At the same time personal experiences relevant to the study (in terms of language proficiency and background information) represent a significant benefit for the research and add to its authenticity. They arise as natural and unavoidable qualifications to the research.

There are also ethical issues to be acknowledged. In line with the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association, researchers of virtual communications are advised to consider whether their research is intrusive, whether the venue is perceived as "private" or "public" space, how confidentiality can be protected, and whether and how informed consent should be obtained. With the view of these requirements, passive collection of material on-line as the least intrusive research behaviour was chosen for the study. At the time of writing, open access forums with high public participation were considered in relevant literature as public domains; they were open for unrestricted quoting and were exempt from informed consent demands.

166 See 2.5.a.

III

The thesis examined the dynamics of self-identifications of migrants settled in the UK. In accordance with the central aim of the study and building upon Foucault's analysis of discourse and Lotman's ideas of cultural appropriation as translation and dialogue between systems, the study had a number of key theoretical and empirical objectives which were closely interlinked: 1) to identify and analyse the object of knowledge which supports migrants' collective self-identification, 2) to further investigate "othering", address the issues of belonging and examine how the borders between *us* and *them* drawn by migrants reflect their self-identification, 3) trace and analyse patterns of cultural appropriation.

The findings were discussed in greater detail in 4.6 of this dissertation and will be briefly summarised here.

Europeanism as an object of knowledge of migrants' discourse

Europeanism as an object of knowledge of migrants' discourse was identified during the pilot stage of the project upon close reading of the sample (this part of experiment is exemplified by detailed discussion of one of the threads in 4.1.). It was noted that participants' perception of what and who is European had been constructed through such grids of specification as *культура* and *цивилизация*. Further investigation of these key-concepts allowed the following conclusions: universal culture and civilisation are perceived by Russian-speaking participants as achievements that have been produced and enjoyed solely in Europe (which was not clearly defined geographically). Contributors did not accept those contemporary realities of Europe that did not correlate with their perception of European cultural tradition. Europeanism was seen by participants as some objective truth (and shared knowledge about it), but, as the dissertation demonstrated, the object of knowledge was produced by the conventional nature of migrants' discourse. The study linked the object of knowledge with the dilemma of the West as the great Other, which was formative for the Russian national identity discourse.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ 2.3.c.

Europeanism through the system of othering

Europeanism was even more clearly distinguished through the system of othering attached to it. It was found that the process of discoursing differences on-line was marginalised/challenged and complicated by the “existence” of different Others. The binary system of othering, which characterised Russian identity discourse, was undermined by the multiplicity of contacts between different cultures in the host country and geopolitical changes worldwide. The study suggested a typology of the othering and classified “them” as a combination of positive or negative, internal or external “others”. These types of “others” (positive internal, positive external, negative internal and negative external) were clearly separated by migrants, who used different discursive practices to conceptualise them.

Appropriation of the new as a dialogue between cultures

Such a complex system othering (instead of a simple binary one) already proves that discursive conventions participants were socialised within have been challenged by the process of learning at their new place of residence. Following Lotman the study analyses several possible ways of appropriation of external features by a stable cultural system: as a lengthy process of coexistence and slow cross fertilisation of allegedly separated discursive domains often marked by the use of different languages; as a rearrangement of elements to correspond to new markers of prestige (similar to the change of fashion style); and finally as a result of active penetration of foreign elements through new practices. The above modes were exemplified by relevant extracts from the threads¹⁶⁸.

Summary of the key findings

Thus, key findings of the study include: (a) The legacy of the Russian National Identity Discourse encourages the categorisation of prestigious phenomena as European. The concept of “Europeanism” represents a mental construct created and promoted by the migrants’ discourse on-line. The researched population use this

¹⁶⁸ See 4.5.

object of knowledge as a means of self-identification to represent their resettlement as rightful, and distinguish themselves from anything of low status that has been “branded” (by the discourse) non-European (b) The newcomers experience difficulties in perceiving cultural diversity as a beneficial social feature, but attempt to fit into the mainstream (“European”) identity of the host society as they perceive and understand it. (c) The process of migration does not straightforwardly trigger identity changes amongst the migrant group, and the cultural appropriation through their contact with the host country has a differentiated character. Several forms of cultural appropriation were analysed using Lotman’s analysis of culture as dialogue and translation¹⁶⁹.

IV

This thesis represents an interdisciplinary investigation and contributed in several ways to the areas of regional studies, migration, digital media and the sociology of identity.

Firstly, the dissertation took a broader look at the debates and findings in the area of diaspora/transnationalism studies and linked them to extensive scholarship on the Russian emigration, culture and identity. The study contributed to holistic enrichment of diaspora studies, by linking together history and traditions of Russian migrations with research on international migration flows, resettlements and diasporic solidarities.

Secondly, the study provided a much needed insight into identity negotiations of migrants to the UK. It demonstrated in which ways cultural dilemmas of the researched group were influenced by their native culture discourses (through migrants’ socialisation in the country of origin and through constant contacts with it). However, the study provided evidences of an on-going learning process, during which migrants grew accustomed to new cultural markers and social norms. By analysing both the impact of host country experiences and the legacy of native

¹⁶⁹ See this thesis 4.4. and 4.5.

culture discourses, the dissertation contradicts a strong line of public discussions in different countries which holds that migrants fail largely to integrate themselves with the host culture and preserve their loyalties and cultural dispositions (e.g. Wolf and Tudose 2005; Sniderman et al. 2004).

Finally, the study critically assessed a new type of data (textual material from migrants' web-forums), justified its use for migration and diaspora studies, and developed sampling and analytical techniques for such data. The working model of analysis developed in the thesis is suitable for conducting comparative studies and monitoring shifts in the identity negotiations of different migrant groups.

Much more needs to be done in order to understand the complex processes of migrants' integration, their Self/Other dialectics and their self-representations in the media. Several strands for future research come out of this thesis. Evidently, the comparative study of the dialectics of Othering in British or Russian digital sources would enhance current findings. Comparative studies of Russian-language forums in different European countries would reveal specific features of migrants' self-representation and would help to identify deeper levels of cross-fertilisation of cultures.

CONCLUSION

The thesis has analysed the process of re-negotiation of identity by the Russian-speaking migrants in the UK as represented through their virtual communication. Here the main findings of the research will be discussed and some suggestions for future research will be formulated.

First, methodological, corpus and social limitations will be discussed. Second, the ethical issues and the role of the researcher will be assessed. Third, the main findings of my experiment will be described. And finally, the thesis will be assessed as an interdisciplinary study, and possibilities of further research will be delineated.

I

Methodologically, this study adopted the critical theory stand which accepts that knowledge is always partial, and a researcher within this tradition aims at investigating the meaning and significance of phenomena rather than predicting their developments (Banister *et al* 1994)¹.

Conceptually it was accepted that contributors were drawn on-line by the feeling of “likeliness” and possibilities of identification with others ² (although individual differences were not ignored and personal contributions were accounted for): on-line discussions were rooted in similar experiences of participants and memories of the native land, informed by realities of the host country and conditioned by the use of the same language. Mediated electronic communications of Russian-speaking migrants have appeared a consistent source of data to research identity negotiations of this group of new settlers in the UK. Drawing on scholarship extant at the time of writing it was accepted that migrants’ self-representation on-line reflects their real-life identity, and their national belonging is salient under conditions of virtual communication. The study

¹ In comparison in the tradition of postpositivism (see Smith 1998) knowledge is understood to be objective and universal, allowing accurate predictions and direct extrapolations (and even interventions) to be made through established relationships. In this tradition, knowledge is perceived as being unaffected by any personal bias or individuality of a researcher.

² 3.6. and 2.5 c, b.

provided evidence that on-line communications of Russian-speaking migrants represented an important diasporic practice, even in comparison with other national communities in the UK³. This allowed me to approach migrants' discourse on-line as collective self-representation, justified the use of chosen data for my investigation and validated further generalisations⁴. However, as stated in the Introduction, there were several limitations attached to this study, and they will be discussed here.

One group of limitations was related to the fact that web-forum as a medium is not completely transparent in terms of audience, internal structure, and product. Research of social status and finances of those who create and moderate these public spaces is in its very early stage. It was taken into account that although on-line discussions tended to be perceived as ex-territorial and public, they were none the less attached to specific providers; participants had to act within prescribed rules; and on-line behaviour was controlled by moderators. In order to minimise these limitations, several criteria were elaborated to compile the most suitable list of sources⁵. Open access forums with active public participation, established practice of post-moderation and a wide range of discussion topics were sampled for the examination.

Another group of limitations was attached to social characteristics of the audience/participants, such as restricted access to Internet connection for some members of the diaspora, as well as age, gender and occupation limitations. The questions of social representativity and further generalisations of my findings had to be addressed with regard to them. Information about social, professional and physical characteristics of participants was collected and presented in the thesis. This information demonstrated wide social representation on-line⁶. But due to the lack of data about Russian-speaking population in the UK in general and certain opacity of on-line identity, it was impossible to create a sample representative for the whole diaspora in the UK. The decision was made to include information about social characteristics of participants (as

³ 3.7.

⁴ See the Introduction.

⁵ 3.8.a. and 3.8.b.

⁶ 3.8., 3.9.

represented on-line) in the body of the text, but not to use such data was for the sampling purposes. A sampling frame was designed to identify the most popular and active discussions, while social characteristics of participants (as represented on-line) were exempt from the sampling frame. Generalisations were made in terms of migrants to the UK, communicating on-line, rather than the whole Russian-speaking diaspora settled in the country.

The third group of limitations was related to Internet forums being dynamic, non-linear, constantly growing bodies of texts. They were continually in a process of discourse production, but had to be represented in a certain fixed form for the purposes of research⁷. The intensity of communication on-line and level of participation differed dramatically from day to day. Also, on-line data was necessarily situated within specific information contexts⁸. In this thesis such content and activity fluctuations were minimised by the length of the study: texts were collected during several years, and the same criteria were applied for eligibility of specific discussions during the whole period of study.

And finally, this study accounted for the on-line data being too rich and accepted that it could not be exhausted. Self-representation on-line has combined visual (e.g. avatars, signatures) and textual (message, the signature, motor) features. At the time of writing due to technological issues only texts of messages were archiveable and therefore accountable for the purpose of this research⁹. Thus, the decision was made to reduce analysis to textual material solely.

⁷ For example, whereas a traditional periodical or book is published in a finished and structured form, on-line discussions are conducted simultaneously, and do not exist in a final form

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II

Certain considerations were attached to the personality and activities of the researcher. Critical theory highlights that individuality of the researcher influences both the process of data collection and its interpretation.

In order to minimise influence on data collection and to avoid reactivity of the data, the researcher refrained from communication on-line in the discussions chosen for the analyses, thus ensuring that data was collected intact.

The researcher was aware that any interpretative study reflected a particular world-view of the scholar and it was not possible to claim total personal neutrality during the long contact of the researcher with the data¹⁰. All care has been taken to minimise the impact of any possible personal bias. Although the dangers of subjectivity should not be exaggerated, it is important to appreciate the possible implications for this particular study. The study was conducted by a native Russian-speaker, brought up in the USSR and at the time of writing resided outside of her native territory. At the same time personal experiences relevant to the study (in terms of language proficiency and background information) represent a significant benefit for the research and add to its authenticity. They arise as natural and unavoidable qualifications to the research.

There are also ethical issues to be acknowledged. In line with the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association, researchers of virtual communications are advised to consider whether their research is intrusive, whether the venue is perceived as "private" or "public" space, how confidentiality can be protected, and whether and how informed consent should be obtained. With the view of these requirements, passive collection of material on-line as the least intrusive research behaviour was chosen for the study. At the time of writing, open access forums with high public participation were considered in relevant literature as public domains; they were open for unrestricted quoting and were exempt from informed consent demands.

¹⁰ See 2.5.a.

III

The thesis examined the dynamics of self-identifications of migrants settled in the UK. In accordance with the central aim of the study and building upon Foucault's analysis of discourse and Lotman's ideas of cultural appropriation as translation and dialogue between systems, the study had a number of key theoretical and empirical objectives which were closely interlinked: 1) to identify and analyse the object of knowledge which supports migrants' collective self-identification, 2) to further investigate "othering", address the issues of belonging and examine how the borders between *us* and *them* drawn by migrants reflect their self-identification, 3) trace and analyse patterns of cultural appropriation.

The findings were discussed in greater detail in 4.6 of this dissertation and will be briefly summarised here.

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dilemma of the West as the great Other, which was formative for the Russian national identity discourse.¹¹

Europeanism through the system of othering

Europeanism was even more clearly distinguished through the system of othering attached to it. It was found that the process of discoursing differences on-line was marginalised/challenged and complicated by the “existence” of different Others. The binary system of othering, which characterised Russian identity discourse, was undermined by the multiplicity of contacts between different cultures in the host country and geopolitical changes worldwide. The study suggested a typology of the othering and classified “them” as a combination of positive or negative, internal or external “others”. These types of “others” (Positive Internal, Positive External, Negative Internal and Negative External) were clearly separated by migrants, who used different discursive practices to conceptualise them.

Appropriation of the new as a dialogue between cultures

Such a complex system othering (instead of a simple binary one) already proves that discursive conventions participants were socialised within have been challenged by the process of learning at their new place of residence. Following Lotman the study analyses several possible ways of appropriation of external features by a stable cultural system: as a lengthy process of coexistence and slow cross fertilisation of allegedly separated discursive domains often marked by the use of different languages; as a rearrangement of elements to correspond to new markers of prestige (similar to the change of fashion style); and finally as a result of active penetration of foreign elements through new practices. The above modes were exemplified by relevant extracts from the threads¹².

Summary of the key findings

Thus, key findings of the study include: (a) The legacy of the Russian national identity Discourse encourages the categorisation of prestigious phenomena as European. The

¹¹ 2.3.c.

¹² See 4.5.

concept of “Europeanism” represents a mental construct created and promoted by the migrants’ discourse on-line. The researched population use this object of knowledge as a means of self-identification to represent their resettlement as rightful, and distinguish themselves from anything of low status that has been “branded” (by the discourse) non-European (b) The newcomers experience difficulties in perceiving cultural diversity as a beneficial social feature, but attempt to fit into the mainstream (“European”) identity of the host society as they perceive and understand it. (c) The process of migration does not straightforwardly trigger identity changes amongst the migrant group, and the cultural appropriation though their contact with the host country has a differentiated character. Several forms of cultural appropriation were analysed using Lotman’s analysis of culture as dialogue and translation¹³.

IV

This thesis represents an interdisciplinary investigation and contributed in several ways to the areas of regional studies, migration, digital media and the sociology of identity.

Firstly, the dissertation took a broader look at the debates and findings in the area of diaspora/transnationalism studies and linked them to extensive scholarship on the Russian emigration, culture and identity. The study contributed to holistic enrichment of diaspora studies, by linking together history and traditions of Russian migrations with research on international migration flows, resettlements and diasporic solidarities.

Secondly, the study provided a much needed insight into identity negotiations of migrants to the UK. It demonstrated in which ways cultural dilemmas of the researched group were influenced by their native culture discourses (through migrants’ socialisation in the country of origin and through constant contacts with it). However, the study provided evidences of an on-going learning process, during which migrants grew accustomed to new cultural markers and social norms. By analysing both the impact of host country experiences and the legacy of native culture discourses, the dissertation contradicts a strong line of public discussions in different countries which

¹³ See this thesis 4.4. and 4.5.

holds that migrants fail largely to integrate themselves with the host culture and preserve their loyalties and cultural dispositions (e.g. Wolf and Tudose 2005; Sniderman et al. 2004).

Finally, the study critically assessed a new type of data (textual material from migrants' web-forums), justified its use for migration and diaspora studies, and developed sampling and analytical techniques for such data. The working model of analysis developed in the thesis is suitable for conducting comparative studies and monitoring shifts in the identity negotiations of different migrant groups.

Much more needs to be done in order to understand the complex processes of migrants' integration, their Self/Other dialectics and their self-representations in the media. Several strands for future research come out of this thesis. Evidently, the comparative study of the dialectics of Othering in British or Russian digital sources would enhance current findings. Comparative studies of Russian-language forums in different European countries would reveal specific features of migrants' self-representation and would help to identify deeper levels of cross-fertilisation of cultures.

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